MASKELYNE AND COOKE

EGYPTIAN HALL, LONDON, 1873-1904

by

GEORGE A. JENNESS

with an introduction by

NOEL MASKELYNE

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MASKELYNE and COOKE

Courtesy of Magic Circle

EGYPTIAN HALL, LONDON. CIRCA 1903

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EGYPTIAN HALL, LONDON, 1873 - 1904

by

GEORGE A. JENNESS

With an Introduction by

NOEL MASKELYNE

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TO MARY

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INTRODUCTION

THE MAGNITUDE OF the task which Mr. Jenness has undertaken and accomplished in the writing of this book may not be readily apparent to those who come to read it. I know that its production has occupied a deal of the author's time for some years, time taken up in the search for information not readily available to anyone who might have undertaken the task.

This search for information has been made the more difficult because not one member of the Maskelyne family nor, so far as I know, G. A. Cooke, ever kept a diary beyond the first week of any New Year. There is therefore no reliable Maskelyne source to which Mr. Jenness could turn for details that have been searched out from other sources. Any material in the form of letters and records is equally absent as I well know, having searched in vain for any kind of filing system or records kept by any member of the family of J. N. Maskelyne. All of them, including myself, have been deplorable record keepers. None of these discouraging circumstances has deterred the author who, in spite of a lack of material must have pressed on, discovering small scraps of information from time to time, and piecing them together.

The Egyptian Hall, as the author tells, had a chequered career and much that took place there prior to Maskelyne and Cooke would scarcely meet with the approval of the Lord Chamberlain today. However, in the last thirty years of its existence it saw the rise to world-wide recognition of two remarkable personalities, John Nevil Maskelyne, my grandfather and his eventual partner, David Devant. Those who read this book will in all probability have a fairly clear impression of J. N. Maskelyne, a showman to his fingertips who knew exactly how to turn an apparently adverse situation to his advantage in the matter of publicity, and lost no opportunity in doing so. Of David Devant, a much younger man, the impression may be much less clear. J. N. Maskelyne became a public figure away from the Egyptian Hall as well as in it. But David Devant was a magician whose whole life was bound up in magic, so much so and so adept was he, that for many, including myself, he was the greatest magician of all time, and I see none today who could hope to have challenged him.

The tenure of Maskelyne and Cooke at the Egyptian Hall saw the introduction of new features for the theatre world of London, not the least of which was the introduction of a regular 'matinee', something that was quickly followed by many London theatres. When the lease of the Egyptian Hall ran out, Maskelyne and Cooke had the longest run in London entertainment, with the sole exception of Madam Tussaud.

Maskelyne and Cooke became a household word in their day, and at the Egyptian Hall presented the kind of entertainment to which a schoolboy could take his elderly maiden aunt without any cause for blushing. Mr. Jenness has given us some indication of the kind of entertainment it was.

Forestside, Sussex. NOEL MASKELYNE

PREFACE

IN 1913 WHEN I was twelve years old I first enjoyed a magical entertainment. It was at Maskelyne and Devant's Mysteries, St. George's Hall, Langham Place, London, where among other mysteries I saw Frederic Culpitt presenting their *ABC Fly*. On the same bill Charles Morritt presented his *Disappearing Donkey*, and E. A. Maskelyne mystified us with the *Yogi's Star*. And over the years, until England's Home of Mystery closed in 1933, I was a regular visitor. During that time and ever since, I have been fascinated by the name of MASKELYNE and all it implies. I have also collected a vast amount of printed and written material, including a large number of programmes concerning this once world-famous entertainment. Before J. N. Maskelyne moved to St. George's Hall, his entertainment was at the EGYPTIAN HALL, Piccadilly, London, where he first appeared at that Hall in 1873, remaining there until the end of 1904.

This book fulfils a purpose I have for many years had in view, during which much time has been given to research, not only in the British Museum, but also in the library and museum of the Magic Circle in London, where there are some of the actual upholstered "stall" seats which came from the EGYPTIAN HALL. I consider it a privilege to have sat on one of the original seats, and especially appropriate since I was at the same time making notes for this book.

From many other sources have I gathered relevant material, and now assemble it "under one roof" so to speak. It is hoped this fragmentary attempt will provide some interest and instruction. No one more than myself realises how incomplete is my record, but perhaps a later historian will fill in the gaps. This treatise is offered as a contribution to the history of MASKELYNE AND COOKE at the EGYPTIAN HALL.

Enfield, 1967

GEORGE A. JENNESS

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

IN MY SEARCH for information, there are many to whom I must express gratitude for the help so freely given. To Mr. Arthur Ivey, Curator of the Magic Circle Museum for his patience in investigating my awkward questions, and in taking so much trouble in showing me programmes and bills; to Mr. H. E. Pratt, Librarian of the Magic Circle for useful suggestions in the by-ways of research; to the late Mr. Stanley Collins for often sending me illustrated replies and data; to Mr. Harry Latour for his memories of the old Hall which he visited; to the late Edward Victor for recalling to me some of his impressions of the relevant period; to the eminent collector Mr. James B. Findlay who supplied a vast number of newspaper cuttings and magicana, and in whose home we have been made most welcome and enjoyed sharing the magical sight of his endless literary treasures. I am also greatly indebted to him for reading the manuscript of this book, and making scholarly suggestions improving the text; to Mr. Stanley Thomas for many useful notes solving some queries; to Mr. Tom Howard of Isleworth for information on Mr. Cooke; to Mr. E. Jackson-Laurie for helpful notes; to the late Mr. Edward Graves of the *World's Fair; The Stage; Abracadabra;* for the help given by the British Museum Newspaper Library, the City of Westminster Public Libraries, the Hounslow Public Library, and the Crown Estate Office. The newspaper files of the London *Daily Telegraph* have also furnished data. Mr. Allan Jamieson has supplied much useful material from his extensive collection.

Mr. Tom Hayter of Cheltenham has told me something about Mr. Cooke, for which I am grateful. It has given me much pleasure to have made contact with Miss Sheila F. Cooke, the grand-daughter of the famous collaborator with Maskelyne, and special thanks are now given to her for the notes appearing later in the biographical section.

By no means least, I am much indebted to Mr. Noel Maskelyne for his introduction to this book. In so doing he has provided a precious link with his illustrious ancestors.

CHAPTER ONE

EGYPTIAN HALL, PICCADILLY, LONDON

IF TODAY IN LONDON you walked along the South Side of Piccadilly and stopped at Number 170, you would find shops and offices known as Egyptian House. It was on this site that stood the Egyptian Hall. The original building was variously known as the London Museum, Bullock's Museum and Egyptian Hall, and was built about 1811. Over the years alterations were made to the interior of the property, and the ground landlords were the Crown Estate Commissioners. On the ground floor there were shops and the Dudley Gallery over a basement, and the actual Egyptian Hall used by Maskelyne and Cooke was on the first floor. The Waterloo Gallery and Lecture Room were on the second floor. The basement was mainly used as a warehouse. The exterior of the building was of a mock facade of an entrance to an Egyptian Temple with figures.

The Archives Department of the City of Westminster Libraries has made extracts from the rate books for 1873 to 1905 telling me the two shops were then numbered 170 and 172 with the Egyptian Hall numbered 171. The rateable value of the shops was between £800 and £1,000. Number 171 was rated annually from 1885 to 1890 at £417. From 1891 to 1905 with Maskelyne appearing to be the sole tenant, at £959 annually.

Reference to John Timbs' *Curiosities of London,* 1850, will give the reader historical and architectural data. To supplement this, one should also study the *Survey of London* (The Parish of St. James, Westminster) Volumes 29 and 30, 1960. There are also data and plans of The Hall at the Crown Estate Office in London.

As a matter of interest, Jacksons who had a shop on the Egyptian Hall site in which they sold tea, coffee, and foreign produce, are still in business in practically the same place today. It seemed possible to me that Maskelyne and Cooke might well have been customers of this firm. Alas for my surmise. On enquiry it was found Jacksons could not help with my queries. All their old records were destroyed by fire during World War II.

In imagination let us now enter the building and proceed upstairs to the theatre. Some have said it was a gloomy place and thus pervaded with an atmosphere of mystery. The Hall would accommodate about 200 to 300 people. There was a gallery with balcony seats, and Egyptian designs on the walls. Although small, the place would seem large because of a big ornamental dome in the centre. Prices of admission for 1873 were Fauteuils 5/–, Stalls 3/–, Balcony 2/– and 1/–, and these prices prevailed for most of the time.

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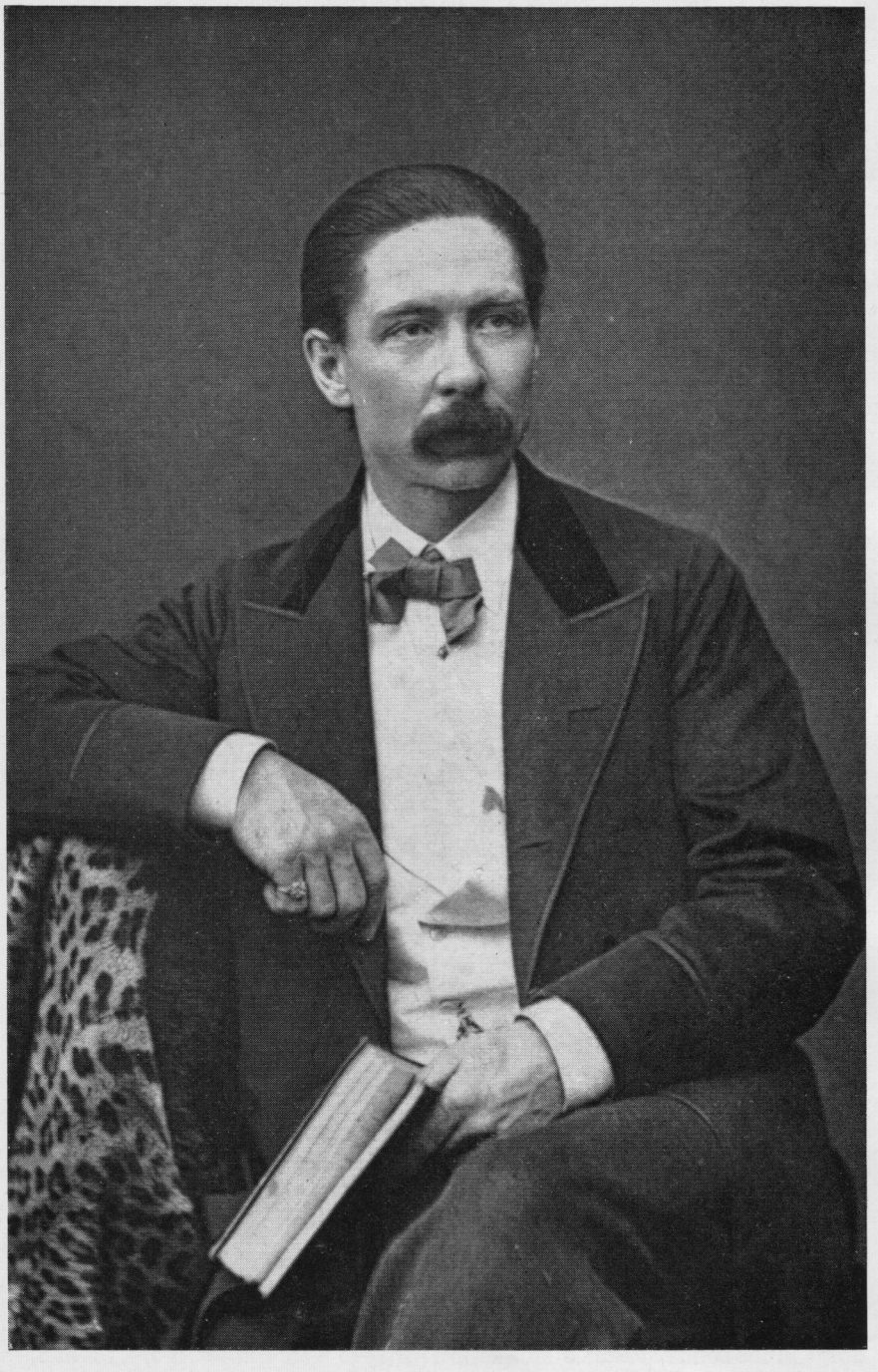


JOHN NEVIL MASKELYNE

The stalls were rather simplified examples of a Jacobean armchair, in two rows of 11, but cheaper seats were not much more than wooden benches with backing. In my collection I have a coloured playbill 13″ × 20″ for 1873 bearing an interesting footnote which says: "Be sure and ask for Maskelyne and Cooke's tickets . . . the second paybox from Piccadilly and UPSTAIRS". This was necessary because Dr. Lynn was giving a rival entertainment downstairs. The late Henry Donn reminiscing in the *Magic Circular,* July 1917 tells of Dr. Lynn in the Large Hall and Maskelyne and Cooke in the Small Hall, and of visitors being pulled about by shouting commissionaires from each of the rival rooms.

In the book *Okito on Magic*, 1952, are some notes about visits to The Hall. Accompanied by his father David Tobias Bamberg and Charles Bertram, Okito said the box office tickets were ejected from a mechanical box.

The entertainment was usually every evening at 8 p.m. with afternoon shows sometimes on alternate days. Maskelyne must have spent a lot of money on advertising, for his Egyptian Hall announcements appeared almost daily throughout the years in several newspapers and magazine type publications. Announcements appeared in Pascoe's *London of Today* 1892 (a sort of guide book), and an illustrated advertisement depicting the Decapitation illusion appeared in Dicken's *Dictionary of London,* 1879.

The stage was very small. From 1890 onwards Francois Cramer arranged music and presided at the piano. He also controlled Maskelyne's Mechanical and Automatic Orchestra, then said to be the most wonderful combination of musical instruments in the world. Cramer had his organ on the right-hand side, close to the stage, and just in front, but above the stage were bells and gongs. Writing in the *British Ring Budget*, November 1962, the late 'Meloc' (Jackson Coleman) said the stage had crimson velvet curtains. At one time the place was lit by gas and later by electricity. The projector used in later years for the animated pictures was on the theatre floor at the rear, almost alongside the audience. There was a long central "run down" from the stage to among the front seats. The duration of the show was about two hours.

I was advised by the Crown Commissioners that in early 1903 Maskelyne unsuccessfully put forward proposals to the Commissioners for the redevelopment of The Hall site.

The Hall was demolished in 1905, and an illustration of this event is shown in *The London Perambulator*, by James Bone, 1925. A famous landmark vanished from the scene, but the Maskelyne entertainment was transferred to St. George's Hall, Langham Place, London, there to remain for many years.

Occasionally I meet old folks who recall their visits to the Egyptian Hall. Most seem to have been taken by older relatives. They usually tell, in vaguely remembered terms, of sitting on gallery seats and of having seen animated pictures of soldiers or trains. Others recall the decapitation of whiskered Cooke, or of escapes from a box which seemed secure.

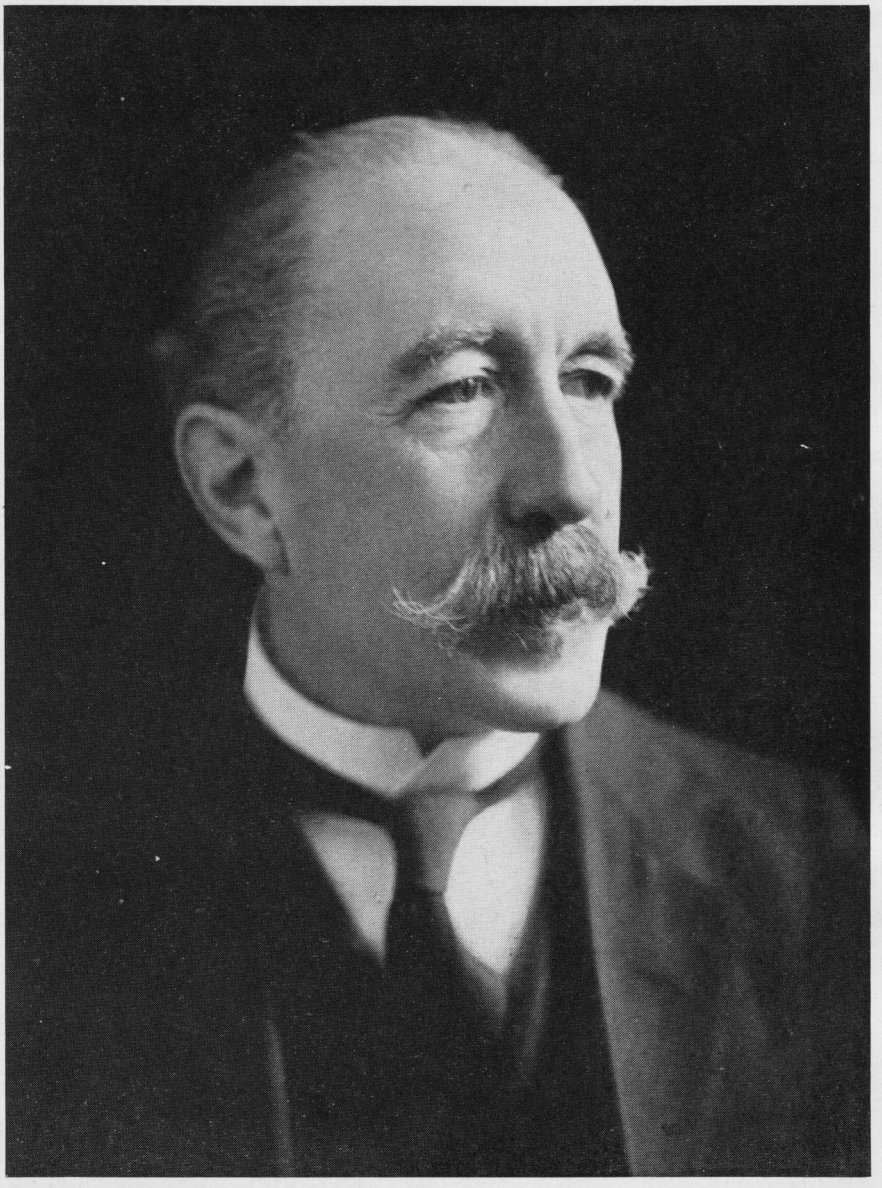


Photo by Claude Harris

NEVIL MASKELYNE (in later years)

But who were those who provided that entertainment of bygone years?

JOHN NEVIL MASKELYNE, the founder of the magical entertainment about which I write was born on December 22nd, 1839 at 20 White Hart Row, Cheltenham, in the west of England. His father was a saddler, and his mother's name was Harriet Maskelyne formerly Brunsdon.

According to published reminiscences (*Strand Magazine* Vol. 39) he had seven sisters and was their only brother. A photograph of his birthplace accompanies an article by the late Victor Farelli published in the *Sphinx Magazine,* August 1946. Much has been written which I do not propose to repeat, but my studies have revealed some lesser known facts. The Maskelyne Family Tree may be found in a book by Mary Arnold-Forster entitled *Bassett Down,* published some years ago by Country Life Ltd., London. This is the record of three centuries of lives in a Wiltshire home. As a young man Maskelyne was a member of a local band, as was George A. Cooke. On March 7th, 1865, so-called spirit mediums, the Davenport Brothers appeared in Cheltenham Town Hall. Maskelyne witnessed this seance, and discovered it resorted to trickery. On August 19th, at the same place, with his friend Cooke, he reproduced the performance. From this success they toured the provinces until opening permanently in London. Maskelyne died in his flat over St. George's Hall in 1917. In 1948 I was present at the unveiling of a memorial tablet in the old Town Hall, Regent Street, Cheltenham, where years ago Maskelyne started his magical career. This ceremony was performed by his grandson Noel Maskelyne in company with Tom Hayter, a magician who had done much local research.

ELIZABETH MASKELYNE (Mrs. John Nevil Maskelyne) was born in 1841 and died on July 23rd, 1911. She assisted in some of the performances.

NEVIL MASKELYNE, the elder son, was born in Cheltenham. He was part-author of the book *Our Magic.* His full name was John Nevil Maskelyne. He died September 1924, aged 62 years.

MISS ADA ARDLEY who played the part of Dolly in *Will, the Witch and the Watchmen,* became the wife of Nevil Maskelyne in 1889. She died in May 1918 and was buried in Wandsworth Cemetery.

EDWIN ARCHIBALD MASKELYNE, younger son of the first J. N. Maskelyne, also born in Cheltenham. Died 1920.

CASSIE BRUCE became the wife of E. A. Maskelyne, assisted in the illusions, and played in the sketches. She was a capable actress, vocalist and dancer. Her stage career commenced in 1889, when as a child she appeared in Benson's Shakespearean Company at the Globe Theatre, and later was a member of the company at the Opera Comique. Before joining Maskelyne she also played in the Lyceum, Garrick and other theatres. There are more details in Selbit's *Wizard,* May 1907. She died November 12th, 1958, aged 83 years, and was buried in St. Pancras Cemetery, East Finchley, London.

J. B. HANSARD was a fine Irish actor who, for forty years from the commencement in London, played the leading comedy parts in all J. N.

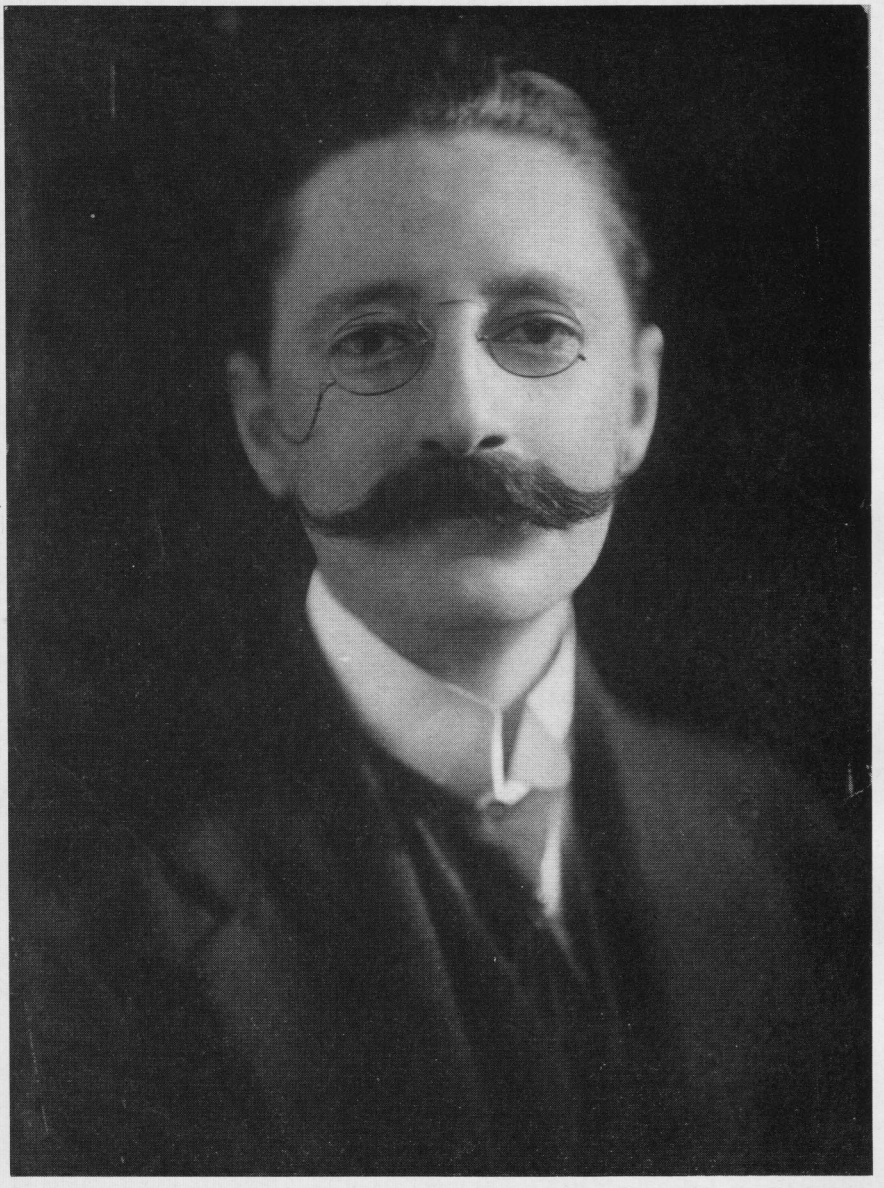


Photo by Claude Harris

EDWIN ARCHIBALD MASKELYNE

Maskelyne's productions. When he died suddenly in January 1908 he had played the character of Miles Mooney in *Will, the Witch, and the Watchman* many thousands of times.

GEORGE ALFRED COOKE was born on May 27th, 1825 and was the confidential assistant of the original Maskelyne to the end of his life. Maskelyne met Cooke by chance prior to 1864. They both belonged to the Band of the Volunteer Rifles, and played the cornet, on some occasions in Pittville Gardens, Cheltenham. Tom Hayter, already referred to, reports to me:

"Cooke was a cabinet maker by trade. I think it can be safely assumed that he made the cabinet in which they enacted the Davenport performance. He was friendly with a Mr. Friskney, a toy and sports dealer, who had premises in Pittville Street, Cheltenham, also a Mr. Lillywhite, another sports dealer in the town. These two gentlemen were responsible for the tying up of the Davenport Brothers when they visited Cheltenham on March 7th, 1865. The tying was done so thoroughly that it took three-quarters of an hour. Please note this performance by the Davenport Brothers was met by a very hostile audience.

Here is a brief extract from an old record of August 1865. Two members of the Cotswold Rifle Corps gave an entertainment in the Town Hall . . . The Gorilla is firmly secured in a barrel and the 'unprotected female' is placed in a large box which is firmly secured with ropes, and then both are placed in the wonderful cabinet. In about five minutes the gorilla releases himself and becomes Mr. Cooke, and the 'lady' likewise getting out of the corded box becomes Mr. Maskelyne.

No doubt this is the forerunner of *Will, the Witch and the Watchman.*"

Cooke's granddaughter, Miss Sheila F. Cooke writes to me as follows:

"I have no personal memories of my grandfather, G. A. Cooke, and any details I can give you are based on things my father had discussed with me. As far as I know the boxes, etc., were made in the workshops at the Egyptian Hall. At one time grandfather lived but a few houses away from where I am living (St. Margaret's Road, Twickenham, Middlesex). He had a large garden where he cultivated fruit and flowers purely for the pleasure of doing it.

His and my father's mode of travel was by train from London to Richmond where they were met by carriage, and driven down to his residence. Legend has it that many residents put their clocks right when the carriage passed. It appears he made a good enough income to live well, and entertain in the manner attributed to the Victorians.

You ask his hobbies. Apart from his garden, he was quite a cyclist."

Cooke died at his home in Twickenham on February 2nd, 1905 and was buried in Isleworth (Middlesex) cemetery, where his grave can still be seen.

Photo by Claude Harris

CASSIE BRUCE
Maskelyne's Leading Lady

CHAPTER TWO

LOOKING BACK

THE NAME OF MASKELYNE was known in the entertainment world for ninety years, but this narrative is confined to Egyptian Hall days 1873 to 1904. It was a different London, for many travelled to The Hall by horse carriage or horse bus, and through streets lit by gas.

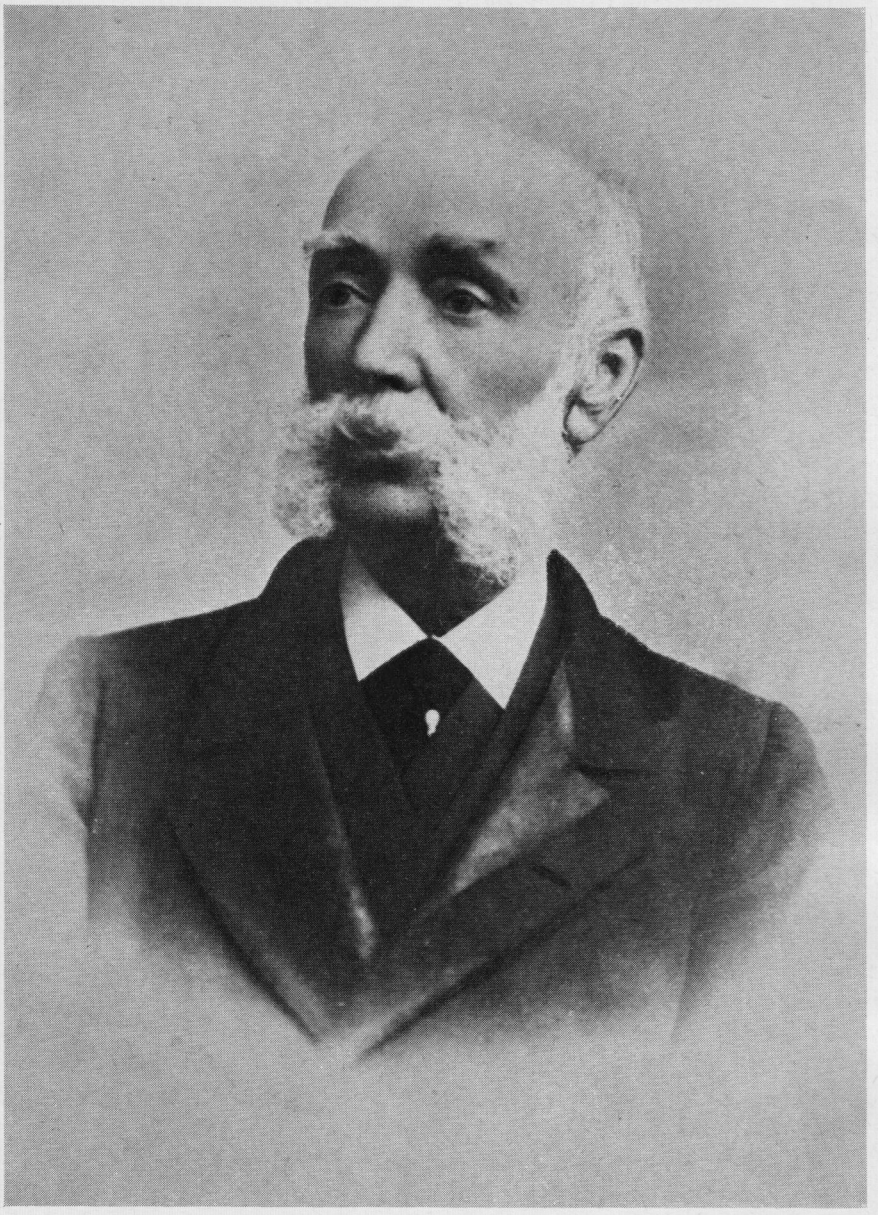
Although myself too young to visit that Hall, I do possess a ticket of admittance in red card about 4″ × 3″ bearing a facsimile signature of J. N. Maskelyne. It was for two fauteuils available for any morning or evening performance during April, and bears the following notice: ". . . but to secure the best seats at the evening entertainments, evening dress is necessary". This ticket, presumably unused, accompanied a signed letter from J. N. Maskelyne, written on Egyptian Hall notepaper April 1st, 1892, addressed to "Dear Mr. Turr".

Prior to their Egyptian Hall days, Maskelyne and Cooke commenced entertaining in 1865 in Cheltenham. Then at the Crystal Palace, Sydenham, Berkeley Castle, Harrogate, Agricultural Hall, Islington, St. James's Hall, London, and elsewhere.

Let us now commence the chronological record. In the following text, Egyptian Hall "*First nights*" are indicated by *italic lettering*.

1873. It was on May 26th that Maskelyne and Cooke transferred their entertainment from St. James's Hall, Piccadilly to the Egyptian Hall across the road, not quite opposite. They commenced in the Large Hall upstairs on the first floor. An opening bill, to be seen in the Magic Circle Museum, described them as the Royal illusionists, which distinction was by reason of their performance at Berkeley Castle, January 20th, 1870 by gracious command of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. The bill was in red, yellow and blue with an illustration of the floating lady, and stated "Commencing Monday evening May 26th at 8 o'clock, and afterwards Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays at 3.00 p.m." It also announced Mr. Henry Collard – the pocket Sims Reeves who incidentally was later described as the smallest tenor in the world, being only 42 inches high and 22 years old. Another item was the *Mystic Freaks of Gyges* and his enchanted den, which was the sub-title of *Will, the Witch and the Watch.*

Almost a century later, on October 16th, 1965, Noel Maskelyne presented the original manuscript of this sketch in the handwriting of his grandfather, to the Magic Circle collection. It becomes one of their most valued treasures.



Courtesy of The Magic Circle

GEORGE ALFRED COOKE

In June 1873 there was a special seance embracing the feats of the Davenport Brothers, who were so-called "spirit mediums" from America. An empty box with a piece of canvas and a cord was placed on the stage. "In the space of eight minutes", an advertisement read, "he will place himself inside the box, lock, cover with canvas, and cord it from the inside while surrounded by the audience."

Mrs. Maskelyne floated in the air and a walking stick toddled about the stage. J. N. Maskelyne presented *Chinese Plate Dancing* in which six or more China plates were skilfully manipulated to spin and ascend a wooden "spiral" stand only five inches wide. This spiral is now in the Magic Circle Museum.

Programmed was twenty minutes with the Oriental magicians. An announcement in June said the 'Box Trick' was "originated, invented and constructed by Mr. Maskelyne nine years ago. The performer 5 ft. 8 ins. was put in a mahogany trunk, box being locked, roped, and knots sealed. Artist escapes in six seconds". Clever spiritualistic tricks were performed in blazing gaslight. Cooke took part in the shows.

Presented during June and July was the magical farce written in 1872, entitled *Will, the Witch and the Watch,* which had for its setting a village green, period November 1799. In the foreground was a wooden trunk, covering canvas and cord, and the Watchman's Box. The latter was a large protean type cabinet having double doors with small windows. Before the presentation of the sketch, J. N. Maskelyne invited members of the audience to inspect these.

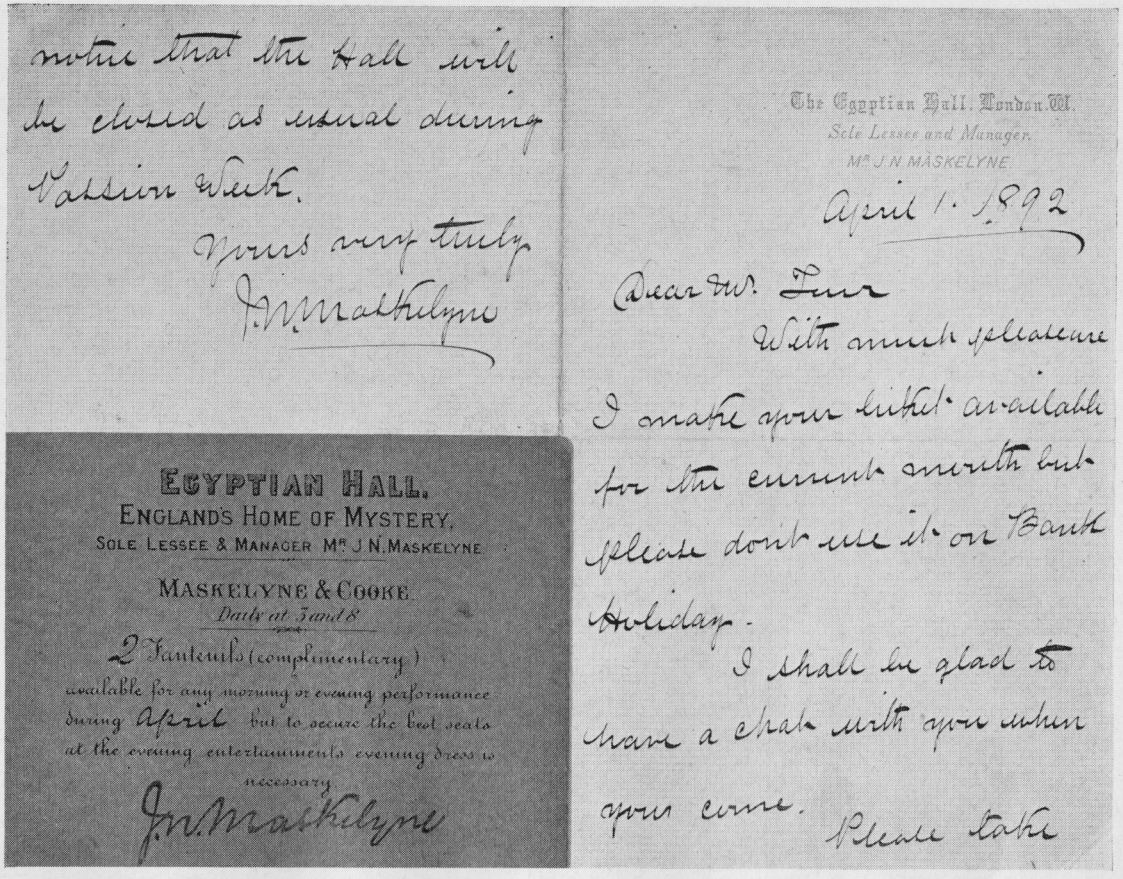
In the early years the characters taking part were Dolly, in love with Will, sometimes played by Mrs. J. N. Maskelyne; Will Constant, her lover, and the Gorilla dually played by G. A. Cooke; Daddy Gnarl the Watchman, Witch of the Village and Joe Killbull, Butcher . . . sometimes all these played by J. N. Maskelyne; and Miles Mooney, Irish Watchman played by J. B. Hansard.

As the dialogue proceeded Will was locked up in the cabinet, the butcher cut a piece off the monkey's tail, this danced about and the monkey was shut in the box. Throughout, the various captives disappeared from their places of imprisonment to be later revealed elsewhere.

During the many years of the Maskelyne shows this sketch was featured at intervals, with consequent periodical changes of performers. The word 'Watch' changed to 'Watchmen' and later to 'Watchman' in the title of the sketch, and any future reference I may make to this will be designated as 'Will, the Witch'.

Their mysteries ceased temporarily at the Egyptian Hall from September 8th when the room was redecorated. The entertainment then visited Brighton, Hastings and Dover.

On November 10th Maskelyne and Cooke re-opened in the Egyptian Hall New Drawing Room which had then been refurnished by Messrs. Lyon, Theatrical upholsterer, Southampton Row (London). It included a new



notice that the Hall will be closed as usual during Easter Week.

Yours very truly
J. N. Maskelyne

EGYPTIAN HALL.
ENGLAND'S HOME OF MYSTERY.
SOLE LESSEE & MANAGER Mr J. N. MASKELYNE

MASKELYNE & COOKE.
Daily at 3 and 8

2 Fauteuils (complimentary)
available for any morning or evening performance during April but to secure the best seats at the evening entertainments evening dress is necessary.

J. N. Maskelyne

The Egyptian Hall, London W.
Sole Lessee and Manager,
Mr J. N. MASKELYNE.

April 1. 1892

Dear Sir

With much pleasure I make your ticket available for the current month but please don't use it on Bank Holiday.

I shall be glad to have a chat with you when you come. Please take

Autograph Letter and (rare) admittance ticket to Maskelyne and Cooke's Egyptian Hall entertainment in 1892

stage, gas fittings, mirrors, carpeting and seating. The show consisted of Plate Dancing, Spiritual manifestations, Will, the Witch, and a sketch *Ursa Major* which introduced a comic bear, and flowers from fairyland. Madam Whitaker, contralto, also sang.

In passing I must mention an extremely rare eight-page booklet which Maskelyne had printed by J. F. Eyles, 77 North Street, Brighton. It is called *The History of a Mystery* – an explanation of the great Box Trick, the origin of the box feat, how performed and burlesqued by imitators. The booklet was a challenge to Dr. Lynn, already referred to, whose real name was Simmons. On the back cover of this booklet J. N. Maskelyne styled himself as a dynamic and automatic illusionist, constructing apparatus for scientific, optical and mechanical illusions. He gave private tuition in parlour magic with watches, coins, handkerchiefs, cards, etc. He also announced the Chinese water trick, or the production and disappearance of globes of fish; blood writing upon the arm as performed only by Foster; the old illusion, recently revived, called second sight, telling numbers or names written in any language upon slips of paper. The latter trick was taught in a few minutes. For terms one had to apply to Mr. Maskelyne at the New Drawing Room, Egyptian Hall.

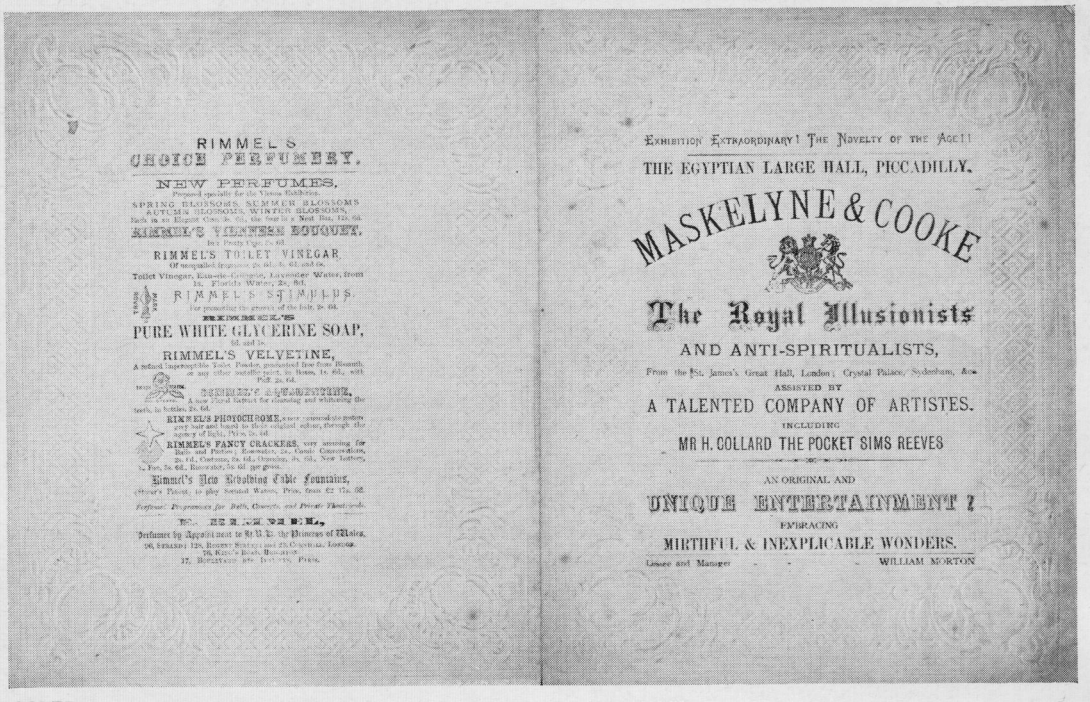
During the whole of 1874 Maskelyne and Cooke advertised almost daily in some newspapers, as did Dr. Lynn who was still a rival at the same venue.

They presented "Modern Miracles" which they said was a registered title. The entertainment seemed to follow the now familiar lines with such items as the Box Feat, Plate Spinning, Animated Walking Stick, Seance, Decapitation Illusion, and Floating Lady. A new programme in March included more spiritual phenomena and the production of spirit faces. There was playing upon luminous musical instruments, materialised "spirit" forms, escape from box and the Tell Tale Hat deception in which a borrowed hat was said to disclose its owner's secrets. The seances included the Coat Feat in enclosed cabinet (Maskelyne's coat removed whilst his hands tied). Japanese Top Spinning was also billed. When they closed for a holiday in September, Alfred Burnett (Humourist) occupied the drawing room.

On October 28th a "new feature tonight" consisted of manifestations without a cabinet. Cooke was bound in strips of linen with the knots sewed by the audience. He was screwed into a wooden case closely fitting his body, and all covered with a net. Under such test conditions "supernatural manifestations" occurred. All this was called the *New Indescribable Seance* in full light. Also appearing was the facial artist Fritz Renhard and Charles Mellon at the piano.

William Morton was the manager of the Maskelyne and Cooke show and on November 26th he had "the honour of taking his first benefit in London". Tickets for this occasion were sold at the Box Office.

The Christmas entertainment included the sketch 'Will, the Witch", and contemporary advertising indicated the early introduction of 'Psycho'.



RIMMEL'S
CHOICE PERFUMERY.

NEW PERFUMES.
Prepared specially for the Vienna Exhibition.
SPRING BLOSSOMS, SUMMER BLOSSOMS,
AUTUMN BLOSSOMS, WINTER BLOSSOMS,
Each in an Elegant Case, 1s. 6d., the four in a Neat Box, 5s. 6d.
RIMMEL'S VIENNESE BOUQUET,
In a Dainty Vase, 1s. 6d.
RIMMEL'S TOILET VINEGAR.
Of unequalled fragrance, 2s. 6d., 4s. 6d., and 6s.
Toilet Vinegar, Eau-de-Cologne, Lavender Water, from
1s. Florida Water, 2s., &c.
RIMMEL'S STIMULUS,
For promoting the growth of the hair, 2s. 6d.
RIMMEL'S
PURE WHITE GLYCERINE SOAP,
6d. and 1s.
RIMMEL'S VELVETINE,
A refined Impreceptible Toilet Powder, guaranteed free from Bismuth,
or any other mineral ingredient, in Boxes, 1s. 6d., with
Puff, 2s. 6d.
RIMMEL'S ALEXANDRITE,
A new Liquid Reagent for cleansing and whitening the
teeth, in bottles, 2s. 6d.
RIMMEL'S PHYSIOGNOME, a new amusement portraying
your hair and beard in their original colour, through the
agency of light. Price, 5s. 6d.
RIMMEL'S FANCY CRACKERS, very amusing for
Balls and Parties; Rosemary, 2s.; Comic Conversations,
2s. 6d., Costume, 5s. 6d., Opossum, 5s. 6d., New Lottery,
1s. Fee, 2s. 6d., Racecard, 2s. 6d. per gross.
Rimmel's New Revolving Table Fountains,
(Fryer's Patent), to play Scented Waters. Price, from £2 12s. 6d.
Perfumes, Preparations for Bath, Closets, and Private Handkerchiefs.
RIMMEL,
Perfumer by Appointment to H.R.H. the Princess of Wales,
96, STRAND; 128, REGENT STREET; and 24, CORNHILL, LONDON.
76, King's Road, Brighton.
17, Boulevard des Italiens, Paris.

EXHIBITION EXTRAORDINARY! THE NOVELTY OF THE AGE!!

THE EGYPTIAN LARGE HALL, PICCADILLY.

MASKELYNE & COOKE

The Royal Illusionists

AND ANTI-SPIRITUALISTS,

From the St. James's Great Hall, London; Crystal Palace, Sydenham, &c.

ASSISTED BY

A TALENTED COMPANY OF ARTISTES.

INCLUDING

MR H. COLLARD THE POCKET SIMS REEVES

AN ORIGINAL AND

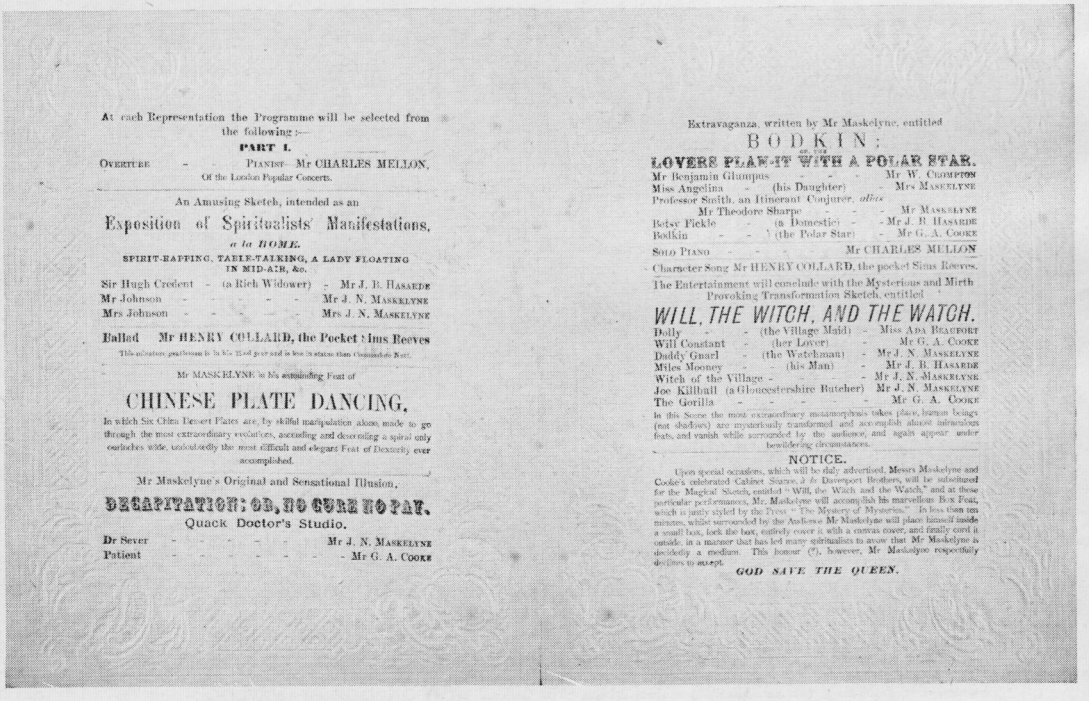
UNIQUE ENTERTAINMENT!

EMBRACING

MIRTHFUL & INEXPLICABLE WONDERS.

Lessee and Manager - - - WILLIAM MORTON

COVER



At each Representation the Programme will be selected from the following:—

PART I.

OVERTURE - - PIANIST—Mr CHARLES MELLON, Of the London Popular Concerts.

An Amusing Sketch, intended as an

Exposition of Spiritualists' Manifestations,

a la HOME.

SPIRIT-RAPPING, TABLE-TALKING, A LADY FLOATING IN MID-AIR, &c.

Sir Hugh Credent - (a Rich Widower) - Mr J. B. HASARDE
Mr Johnson - - - - - Mr J. N. MASKELYNE
Mrs Johnson - - - - - Mrs J. N. MASKELYNE

Ballad Mr HENRY COLLARD, the Pocket Sims Reeves

The admirers gentlemen in his Head gear and is less in stature than Cromwell's Nott.

Mr MASKELYNE in his astonishing Feat of

CHINESE PLATE DANCING,

In which Six China Dessert Plates are, by skilful manipulation alone, made to go through the most extraordinary evolutions, ascending and descending a spiral only ourinches wide, undoubtedly the most difficult and elegant Feat of Dexterity ever accomplished.

Mr Maskelyne's Original and Sensational Illusion,

DECAPITATION; OR, NO CURE NO PAY.

Quack Doctor's Studio.

Dr Sever - - - - - Mr J. N. MASKELYNE
Patient - - - - - - Mr G. A. COOKE

Extravaganza, written by Mr Maskelyne, entitled

BODKIN;

OR,

LOVERS PLAY-IT WITH A POLAR STAR.

Mr Benjamin Glumpus - - - - Mr W. CROMPTON
Miss Angelina - (his Daughter) - Mrs MASKELYNE
Professor Smith, an Itinerant Conjurer, *alias*
Mr Theodore Sharpe - - - Mr MASKELYNE
Betsy Fickle - - (a Domestic) - - Mr J. B. HASARDE
Bodkin - - - (the Polar Star) - - Mr G. A. COOKE

SOLO PIANO - - - - - Mr CHARLES MELLON

Character Song Mr HENRY COLLARD, the pocket Sims Reeves.

The Entertainment will conclude with the Mysterious and Mirth Provoking Transformation Sketch, entitled

WILL, THE WITCH, AND THE WATCH.

Dolly - - - (the Village Maid) - Miss ADA BEAUFORT
Will Constant - (her Lover) - Mr G. A. COOKE
Daddy Gnarl - (the Watchman) - Mr J. N. MASKELYNE
Miles Mooney - - (his Man) - Mr J. B. HASARDE
Witch of the Village - - - - Mr J. N. MASKELYNE
Joe Killhall (a Gloucestershire Butcher) Mr J. N. MASKELYNE
The Gorilla - - - - - Mr G. A. COOKE

In this Scene the most extraordinary metamorphosis takes place, human beings (not shadows) are mysteriously transformed and accomplish almost miraculous feats, and vanish while surrounded by the audience, and again appear under bewildering circumstances.

NOTICE.

Upon special occasions, which will be duly advertised, Messrs Maskelyne and Cooke's celebrated Cabinet Séance, *à la* Davenport Brothers, will be substituted for the Magical Sketch, entitled "Will, the Witch and the Watch," and at these particular performances, Mr. Maskelyne will accomplish his marvellous Box Feat, which is justly styled by the Press "The Mystery of Mysteries." In less than ten minutes, whilst surrounded by the Audience Mr Maskelyne will place himself inside a small box, lock the box, entirely cover it with a canvas cover, and finally cord it outside, in a manner that has led many spiritualists to avow that Mr Maskelyne is decidedly a medium. This honour (?), however, Mr Maskelyne respectfully declines to accept.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN.

INSIDE

AN EARLY PROGRAMME

CHAPTER THREE

PSYCHO

1875. ON JANUARY 11TH Maskelyne and Cooke had the honour of a Royal Command to perform before His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII) at Sandringham.

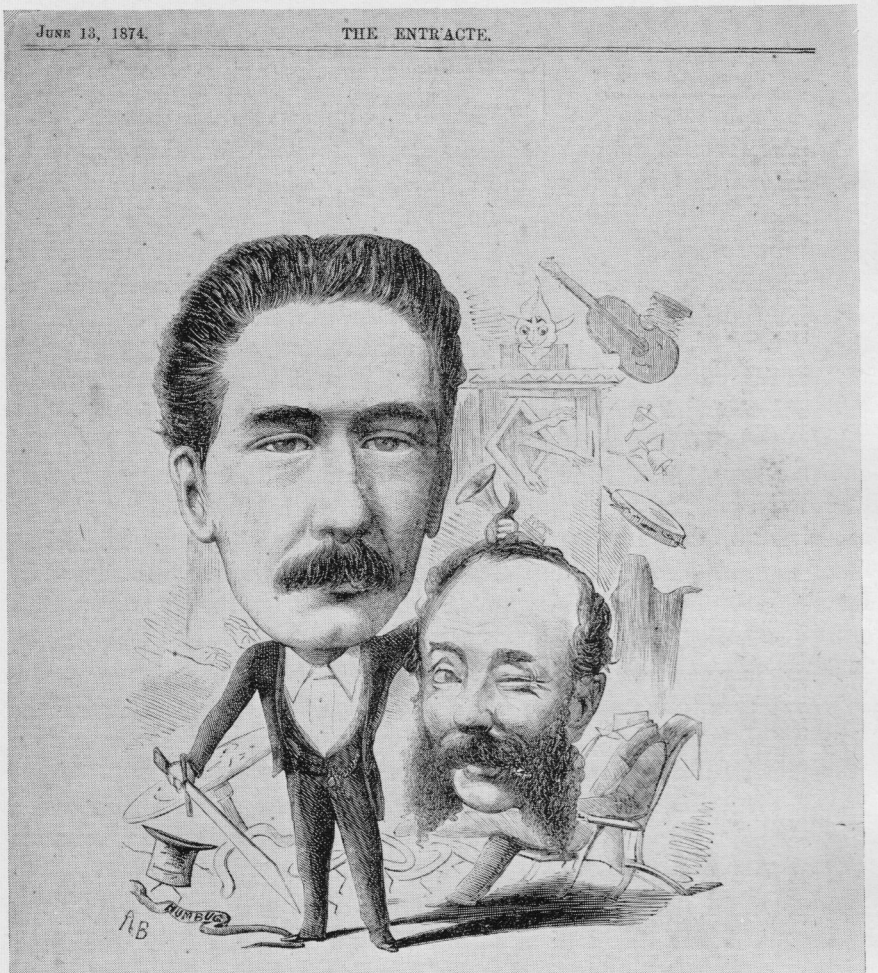
We now enter the era in which J. N. Maskelyne produced skilful mechanical figures, which he called Automata. On January 13th *Psycho* was first shown at the Egyptian Hall. This mechanical figure was produced by Maskelyne as the outcome of a suggestion by John Algernon Clark, a Lincolnshire farmer, who had been trying to devise a card playing machine. Psycho was a small Hindu-like figure 22 inches high isolated on a clear glass cylindrical pedestal. This automaton played a game of whist with three volunteers from the audience, seated before him. Cards were then dealt, those for Psycho were placed upright and singly in thirteen holders in a horizontal row within arm's reach. Using his fingers, Psycho played his cards in turn, and sometimes won the game. An illustrated description of a game whilst played by Psycho, is recorded in the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, pages 499 and 503, February 20th. In a letter personally written by J. N. Maskelyne on January 14th to Mr. J. W. Cockerhand, he said:

> "My automaton is not a toy but a very scientific piece of mechanism the result of many years study and experimentalising and has taken me upwards of two years to construct after the plans were completed. There is no trickery whatever about it, but purely mechanical and self-acting being isolated upon a piece of clear glass and the audience is allowed to examine every part inside and outside and to walk round it whilst at work."

Photographs of Psycho, one exposing part of its interior, were published by Penguin Books 1950 in their Science News series Number 16. This book contains an excellent section by Stanley Byard on Robots which play Games.

Psycho, said to have given about 4,000 performances, was eventually presented to the London Museum, where today it can be seen in its own glass case.

On July 12th *Buatier*, who was an accomplished conjurer from France, appeared in the Maskelyne and Cooke programmes. He presented magic with coins, handkerchiefs and cards. A strong feature was his Flying Cage. A wire cage contained two live canaries, and both cage and birds vanished in full view. Buatier had, up to July 3rd, been with Dr. Lynn in another Hall in the same building. At that time Dr. Lynn advertised the Egyptian large hall to let.



Messrs. MASKELYNE & COOK.

TWO "GAY DECEIVERS."

Maskelyne and Cooke were frequently cartooned over the years This is a fine early drawing from "THE ENTR'ACTE", June 13th, 1874

However, on July 9th the Maskelyne and Cooke manager announced: "that after most unfair rivalry of two years, they are now the sole hosts of England's Home of Mystery".

On July 31st they stated the Large Hall would be re-opened by them later, as indeed it was on August 30th after being refurnished. From August 7th to the 28th Maskelyne and Cooke rested, and during that time they arranged for Buatier to carry on in the Egyptian Hall Drawing Room or Small Hall, where he continued until October.

During that year Fritz Renhard gave facial impressions, Will, the Witch was shown in which Maskelyne, Cooke, Hansard and Mrs. Crompton played parts; there also continued the plate dancing, seances, coat feat, Manton's musical novelty, Madam Whitaker (contralto), Charles Mellon, and J. N. Maskelyne still "floating". In a sketch described as an exposition of spiritualistic manifestations (rapping, table talking and floating lady), J. B. Hansard played the part of Rich Widower, Sir Hugh Credent; J. N. Maskelyne played Mr. Johnson and Mrs. J. N. Maskelyne portrayed Mrs. Johnson. A decapitation sketch found J. N. Maskelyne as Dr. Sever, and G. A. Cooke as his patient.

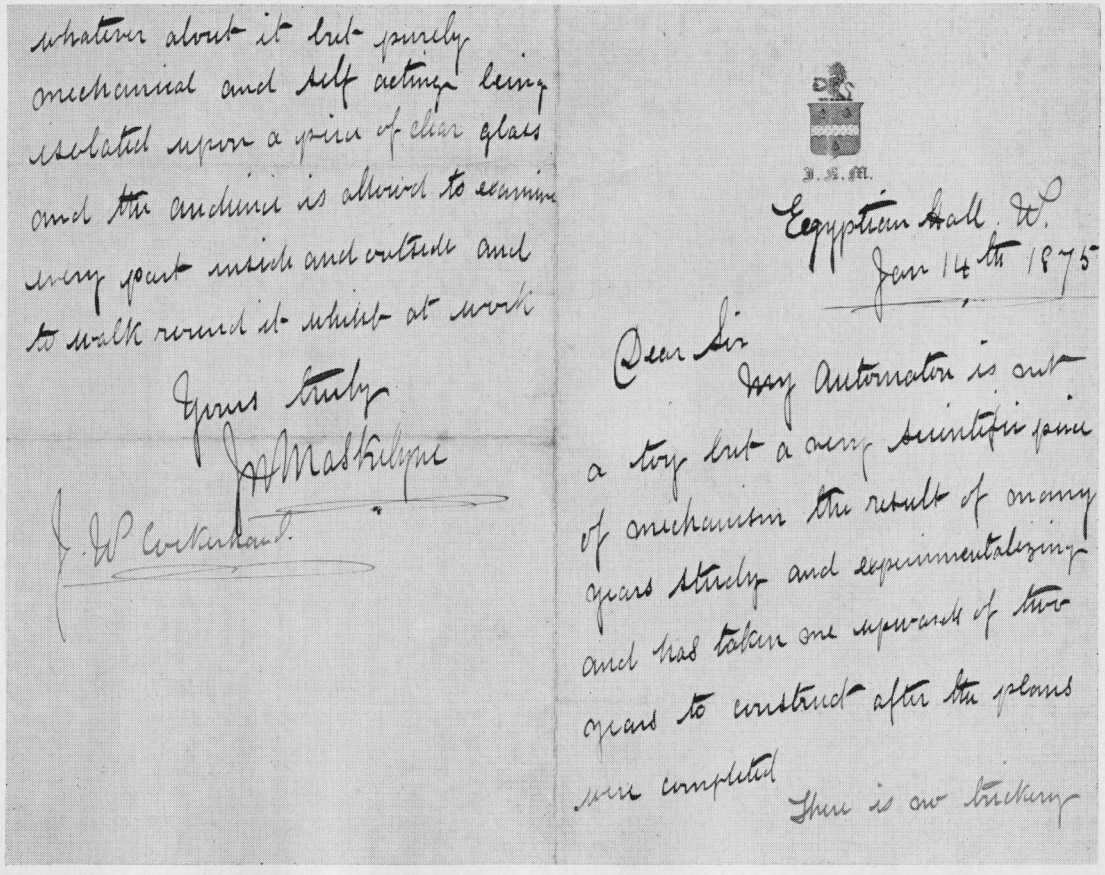
Another sketch called Ursa Major included the following: Mr. Alderman Glumpus played by W. Crompton; Theodore Sharpe played by J. N. Maskelyne; Bodkin (a polar bear) played by G. A. Cooke; Miss Angelina played by Mrs. Maskelyne, and Betsy Fickle (a domestic) was played by J. B. Hansard.

1876. The Egyptian Hall by this time was one of the "musts" where parents and uncles had to take the children to see the Maskelyne and Cooke show. On arrival at the box office, payments in those far off days were not made in paper money, for the golden sovereign was the legal tender, with silver shillings, and pence also. The young people could attend an afternoon performance at 3.00 p.m., and there was a show at 8.00 p.m., each lasting two hours. These times prevailed throughout the long era of the Maskelyne entertainments.

Early that year the visitor would have been able to see Maskelyne presenting Psycho playing whist. But in addition, this automaton had become an adept in spelling any word then current. Written words concealed by the audience were eventually "divined" by Psycho, and spelt. He was an arithmetician and gave answers to calculations by sliding numerals in front of an aperture near his hand. He could pick out marked playing cards and by striking a bell denoted values. He shook hands with his partner in whist before leaving the stage. Renhard was still on the bill, as were the light and dark seances.

Hailed as a new sensation was "Levitation Extraordinary" in which the whole stage was illuminated. Two powerful lights followed the progress of Maskelyne as he floated over the heads of the audience as high as the lofty dome in the centre of the room. He returned to the stage horizontally.

In my collection I have a fully illustrated showcard of Maskelyne "floating"



whatever about it but purely
mechanical and self acting being
inclosed upon a piece of clear glass
and the mechanic is allowed to examine
every part inside and outside and
to walk round it while at work

Yours truly
J. W. Maskelyne

J. W. Cookham.

J. N. M.

Egyptian Hall. W.
Jan 14th 1875

Dear Sir

My Automaton is not
a toy but a very scientific piece
of mechanism the result of many
years study and experimentalizing
and has taken one upwards of two
years to construct after the plans
were completed

There is no trickery

Historically important is this letter in Maskelyne's own handwriting concerning PSYCHO
Note the crested heading

with Cooke looking on from the small Egyptian Hall stage. Beyond the footlights can be seen some of the audience who seem to be close to this levitation. The showcard, which was printed by D. & J. Allen of Belfast, is 15″ × 20″, has black lettering on yellow ground with the main picture practically filling the space in brownish black.

Maskelyne published a number of bills and colourful cards to advertise the shows, and these are now becoming increasingly difficult to acquire.

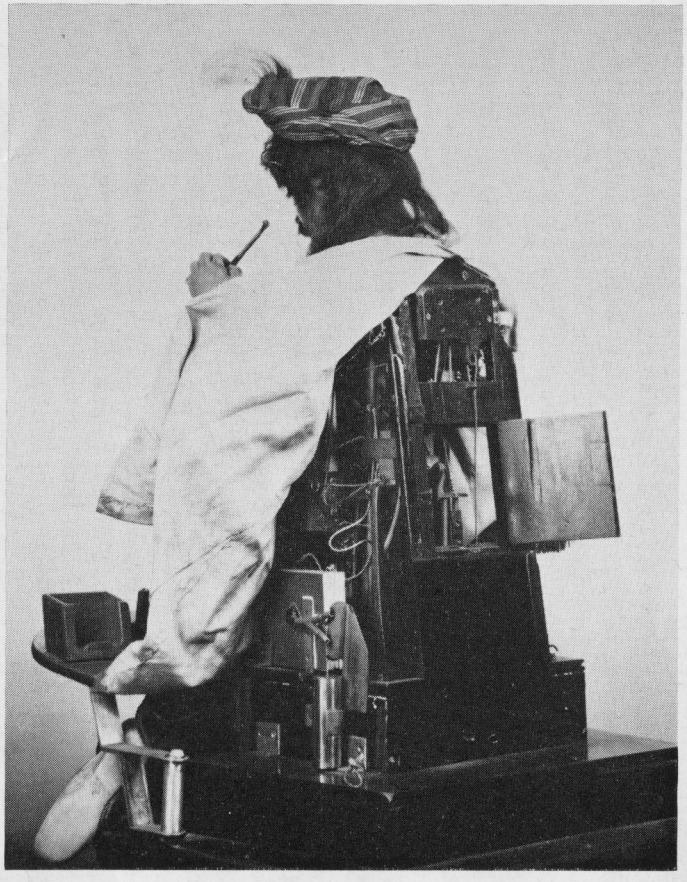
On July 28th the sudden indisposition of Cooke was announced, and so the annual vacation was earlier than usual. Parties booked for that week were offered their money back, or alternative admittance later.

However, they re-opened on August 14th with what was called a new feature – the *Spirit Musical Box*. An examined musical box was suspended from the roof and there played tunes at the command of Maskelyne, or the audience. Other features at this time were Plate Spinning, the new Japanese Drawing Room Decoration Trick (which I have been unable to identify), Psycho, Seance, and Manton in a musical act.

On October 10th the afternoon performance did not take place because Maskelyne had to appear as a witness against "Dr." Henry Slade, at Bow Street Police Court. Full details of this case were reported in the newspapers of that time. And on October 21st the *Illustrated London News* published a long report with an illustration of Maskelyne in the Police Court witness box, where he demonstrated Slate Writing. All this must have brought Maskelyne lots of publicity for his entertainment at The Hall. In November, and for a long time afterwards he was presenting Slate Writing in the regular programmes.

For Christmas, Herr Schalkenbach presented his Orchestre Militaire Electro Moteur. Whatever this may have been, we are told this accompanied the illusions of Maskelyne, and at intervals there were beautiful and marvellous musical effects by electricity.

As in earlier years Maskelyne and Cooke continued to advertise very extensively, and almost daily throughout the twelve months. Their small advertisements, often several on one day, were regular features on the front pages of such London newspapers as the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Times*, and announcements were seen in other journals.



These photographs are published by courtesy of the Trustees of the London Museum

HOW PSYCHO LOOKS TODAY

CHAPTER FOUR

ZOE, FANFARE AND LABIAL

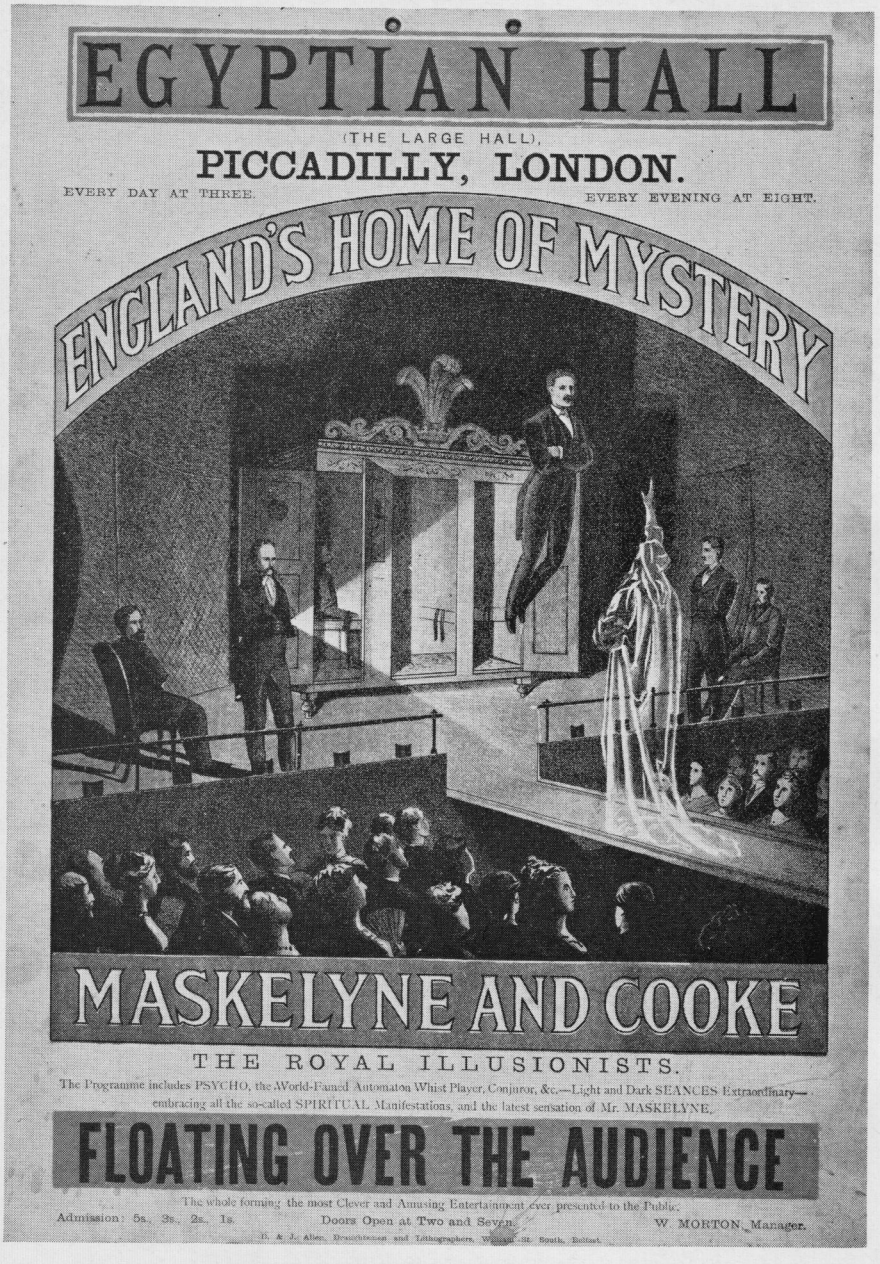
IN JANUARY 1877 SCHALKENBACH and his Electro Moteur were still accompanying the Maskelyne illusions. Psycho continued to entertain, reaching his 1,264th performance on February 2nd. Also in the early part of the year, T. Manton played on the grand piano; Japanese Top Spinning and the Drawing Room Decoration trick were still on the bill, as were the light and dark seances in which the spirit form of "John King" appeared rising from the stage, and distributed flowers to the audience from the spirit garden. There was also the self-levitation of Cooke floating into The Hall, taking with him the cabinet in which he was secured, a distance of 55 feet to the ceiling.

For one shilling a book written by Maskelyne entitled *Modern Spiritualism* which exposed the frauds of the so-called spirit mediums, could be purchased at The Hall. For sixpence another booklet entitled *Maskelyne & Cooke the Royal Illusionists* was on sale, and this contained a full description of the entertainment. Two pages were devoted to the following:

"Barney Maguire's Account of his Visit to Maskelyne and Cooke's Entertainment.

Dear Norah,

I've been and I've seen 'em,
And wonders they surely can show;
They beat all creation between 'em,
How that is I'll soon let ye know;
First a gentleman sets to a-spinning
Plates and dishes that dance up and down,
Till the deaf'ning applause he is winning
Might be heard to the end of the town.
Such quadrilles and such capers, Mavourneen,
The dishes are cutting, my dear
By their wonderful twisting and turning
My pate will be turned for a year!
Then the Spirits a lady sets flying,
(Not "spirits" with water we mix!)
While to run chairs and tables are trying,
And there ye'll see rale "walking" sticks!
They cut a man's head off – no matter,
Though body and head be apart,


EGYPTIAN HALL
(THE LARGE HALL),
PICCADILLY, LONDON.
EVERY DAY AT THREE.
EVERY EVENING AT EIGHT.
ENGLAND'S HOME OF MYSTERY
MASKELYNE AND COOKE
THE ROYAL ILLUSIONISTS.
The Programme includes PSYCHO, the World-Famed Automaton Whist Player, Conjuror, &c.—Light and Dark SEANCES Extraordinary—embracing all the so-called SPIRITUAL Manifestations, and the latest sensation of Mr. MASKELYNE,
FLOATING OVER THE AUDIENCE
The whole forming the most Clever and Amusing Entertainment ever presented to the Public.
Admission: 5s., 3s., 2s., 1s. Doors Open at Two and Seven.
W. MORTON, Manager.
D. & J. Allen, Draughtsmen and Lithographers, Wellington St. South, Belfast.

LEVITATION

The latter is seen there to chatter
In a way to make nervous folks start,
Till they find that fast on its shoulders
The head still continues to grow,
Though how, bothers all the beholders;
'Twould puzzle a lawyer to know!
There's a Bear, too, the funniest fellow!
Though white – troth! – I call him a cuire, –
Why, he'll play on the cornet, and bellow
Till laughter near splits ye, be sure!
The marvels and fun that's to follow
Ye'll not match should ye live to four score.
O Norah, my dear, it beats hollow
All sights we have e'er seen before: –
It's a play – there's a lady, her lover,
A watchman, a butcher, a witch,
And a broth of a boy ye'll discover,
With a taste of the brogue! Oh, it's rich! –
And there's an ould baste, to my thinking
That Gorilla's to eating inclined, –
He swallows his victims like winking,
And leaves not a morsel behind!
Then the coming and going's a mystery –
Out of a watch-box, and trunk, and the stocks –
Faith! sure as I write ye this history,
All previous theory it shocks!
I think it's the witch's invention, –
Or her cat's – it's as black as my hat!
If not, it is – hush – Do not mention
His name, or he'll have ye, that's flat!
But faith – ye'll see nothing that's frightful;
There is fun, much as heart could desire;
Mirth, mystery, music delightful
Has charmed your fond

BARNEY MAGUIRE."

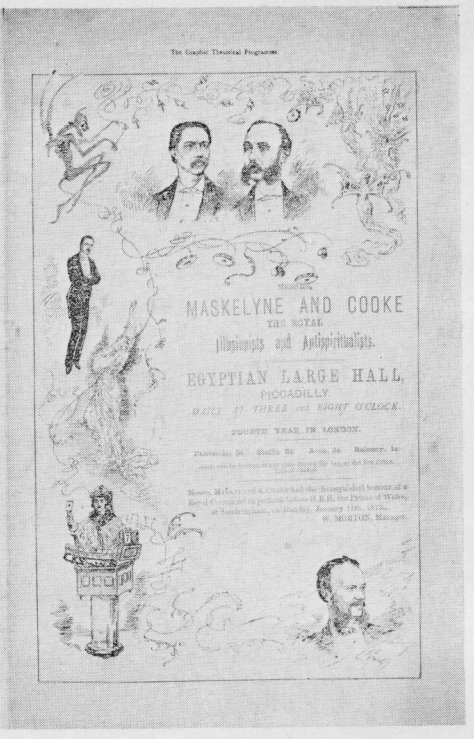
These lines were sent to the manager during the first London season, and he thanked the unknown correspondent.

Slate Writing was still being shown, and Charles Woodman entertained with musical instruments.

In April, Mr. Jolly Nash presented his merry entertainment in the Drawing Room.

May 21st saw the first appearance of *Zoe,* a mechanical lady, suitably dressed, and seated on a pedestal, and to become a partner for Psycho. Before the figure, at arm's length was an upright frame containing paper on

The Graphic Theatrical Programme.
JOHN GOSNELL & CO.,
Angel Passage, 93, Upper Thames St.,
LONDON,
Perfumers, Fine Soap Makers & Fancy Brush
MANUFACTURERS,
To Her Majesty & H.R.H. the Princess of Wales.
PERFUMES FOR THE HANDKERCHIEF, &c.,
TOILET WATERS AND VINEGARS,
PREPARATIONS FOR THE HAIR.
PREPARATIONS FOR THE COMPLEXION,
Perfect Freedom
Premature Decay,
And Teeth
Pearl-like Whiteness.
FINE TOILET SOAPS,
JOHN GOSNELL & CO'S GRAPHIC THEATRICAL PROGRAMME
R. M. Burgoyne, ART PRINTER, 93, Upper Thames Street.



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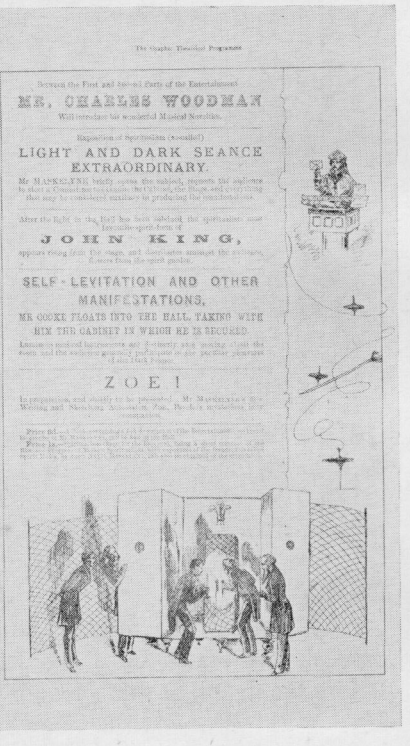


INSIDE

Programme for fourth year in London.
Note the illustrations of Maskelyne, Cooke and Morton

which Zoe was able to draw with a pencil. The automaton, which was life-size, made outline drawings of the heads of such famous people as the Prince of Wales, Mr. Gladstone and the Earl of Beaconsfield. Reports of the time tell us the sketches were excellent and easily recognised. Opportunity was given for examination of Zoe, but no human being was discovered concealed within.

My collection contains a nice showcard 15″ × 21″ printed by Stafford & Co., Nottingham, in red, yellow, light blue and black inks. The format is three vertical panels, the wide centre one contains a picture of inventor J. N. Maskelyne presenting Zoe in action. The two marginal panels contain several drawings of famous people of the day.

Maskelyne and Cooke closed for their annual vacation on August 13th, and re-opened on September 3rd. They reported Lyon & Son had elegantly decorated the room and laid down an entirely new sloping floor.

Concertina artist, Henry Roe, appeared in October, and in November the Drawing Room was offered to let.

1878. My unfolding chronicle indicates this was their sixth year in London, when familiar features continued to entertain, such as Psycho, Zoe, Seances, Plate dancing, Japanese top spinning in which the tops ascended inclined planes, Charles Mellon at the piano, and that the spirits were surrounded with blue phosforic flames.

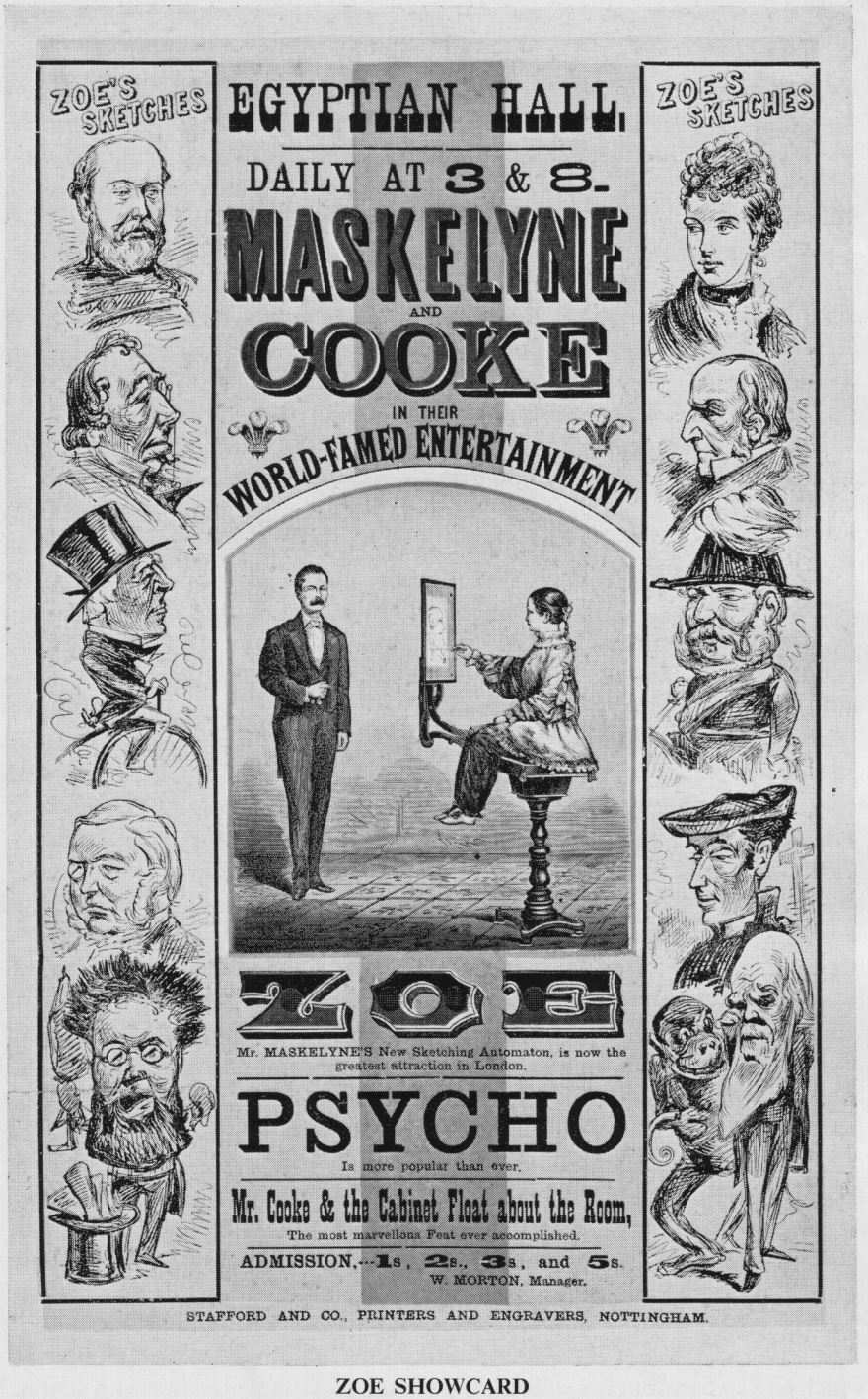
January 7th saw the first production of a comic illusory sketch entitled *Elixir Vitae* in which Maskelyne played the character of Dr. de Bolus with Cooke representing a Gloucestershire farmer who was eventually decapitated.

Because Maskelyne and Cooke showed very similar effects for years we must conclude there was an ever-changing stream of visitors to their well advertised Home of Mystery. Their showmanship must have been excellent. It must be remembered, too, at that time there were many other rival entertainments in London competing for patronage. For instance, in the nearby St. James's Hall one could have seen the Moore and Burgess Minstrels.

April 29th was another important milestone at the Egyptian Hall when Maskelyne first showed his automaton cornet player *Fanfare*, described at the time as a wax model of a boy, seated in a chair. To supply him with air, brass tubes were connected to him from large bellows on the stage.

After their vacation The Hall was re-opened on September 2nd when Psycho gave his 2000th performance, and Zoe her 906th. During the vacation six elegant boxes were erected on either side of The Hall, each seating four persons, said to be for the nobility and aristocracy; and also a Royal Box which took eight chairs. The prices ranged from 21/– to $2\frac{1}{2}$ guineas for the boxes.

September 2nd saw the first appearance of a fourth automaton Labial which played on an euphonium. Fanfare and Labial had mechanical lip action, and were joined by their inventor Maskelyne, the trio playing "The Death of



ZOE SHOWCARD
The sketches were skilfully drawn

Nelson", that great Sims Reeves favourite (with trumpet obligato by Fanfare); and also part of a Jingo March.

From October to Christmas the four automata, and many of the earlier favourites prevailed. At times, during that year, in the Drawing Room, Turquand and Pelham gave dramatic and mimetic recitals, and H. Liston offered ventriloquism, instruments and monologues. The Maskelyne and Cooke shows were then always in the Large (Egyptian) Hall.

In December, in North London, there was a livestock show of pigs, cattle, etc., which attracted visitors from many distant parts of England. Maskelyne was shrewd enough to make his current advertising topical by drawing attention in the following words. "CATTLE SHOW. Omnibuses from the Agricultural Hall to the Egyptian Hall every few minutes. No stranger thinks of returning home before witnessing the most marvellous entertainment in the world".

In 1879 the regular features continued, although on February 17th it was announced "no more darkness". This meant the dark seances were finished in order to make place for the first production of *Zach The Hermit*, or modern spiritualism by an ancient medium. In this sketch the objects of special interest were the winking moon, automatic talking parrot, evolutions of a mechanical snake charmed by the flute of the hermit, animated table, dancing walking stick and the levitation of Zach, the latter character being played by Maskelyne. Other characters were Ralph a gipsy, Squire Oakland and Barney his Irish servant. The scene ended with Cooke apparently holding his head under his arm. Another tried and tested favourite was Elixir Vitae. At this time Zoe's sketches were offered for sale at one shilling each, and photographs of Psycho, Zoe, Fanfare and Labial could be had from the Attendants at The Hall.

Maskelyne and Cooke's annual vacation was from July 14th to re-opening on Bank Holiday, August 4th. There were many attractions in and out of London at that time which may seem quaint today, such as the hansom cab races at the Alexandra Palace. However, the holiday programme at The Hall included Henry Roe's Quintette party of members playing on five concertinas, Zach as previously, the four automata, plate spinning, and Pelham the mimic.

In November Mellon played on a *new electric organ*, surrounding the audience with mystery, with various musical instruments in distant parts of The Hall being electrically played.

The Christmas season began on December 15th with an amusing extravaganza entitled *Sennacherib in Two Parts and Screvins in Two Pieces*. Part one was set in a quack doctor's studio with Maskelyne playing the part of Dr. Bolus; Sennacherib his Page played by Hansard, and Farmer Screvins by Cooke. Part two depicted the Hermit's Home in which Maskelyne was the Hermit, Hansard was Sennacherib his servant, Crompton was Squire Oakland, and Cooke was Farmer Screvins (in two pieces). In this sketch it would seem old effects were presented under new names.

COVER

The Graphic Theatrical Programme.
SEVENTH YEAR IN LONDON.
PART I.
OVERTURE Grand Piano Mr. CHAS. MELLON
PLATE SPINNING.
PSYCHO & ZOE,
THE TWIN AUTOMATIC MYSTERIES.
FANFARE!
Mr. Maskelyne's First Musical Automaton.
LABIAL!
Mr. Maskelyne's Second Musical Automaton.
Photographs of "PSYCHO," "ZOE," "FANFARE," and "LABIAL" can be had of the Attendants
PIANO SOLO MR. CHAS. MELLON
ELIXIR VITÆ.
The Graphic Theatrical Programme.
MR. HENRY ROE'S QUINTETTE PARTY,
ZACH, THE HERMIT,
Modern Spiritualism by an Ancient Medium.
Privates Boxes 21s. and 25s.
Fauteuils 5s. Balcony Stalls 4s. Reserved Seats 3s.
Area 2s. Gallery 1s.

INSIDE

Programme for 1879. Interesting for the marginal illustrations depicting a typical show

On December 11th, H.R.H. the Princess of Wales honoured the Egyptian Hall with her presence at the afternoon performance.

On January 12th, 1880, a published announcement said that because of health reasons of Maskelyne, there would be no performances on Mondays, and this arrangement prevailed until the end of May. However, Maskelyne and Cooke were showing on other days at three and eight. You might be interested to know something about the actual style of the printed programmes which were sold sometimes for a penny, twopence or threepence, and often printed on a tinted paper. Four pages were made from a single sheet folded. The billing matter occupied the centre and was sometimes bordered with many interesting drawings of magical items then current. There were delightful pictures of the four automata in action, of Cooke holding his head, of the cave with its weird occupants, the parrot, snake, floating table and walking stick. Some programme covers had Egyptian characters neatly decorating the borders.

All the older favourites were still being shown throughout the year. On occasion, simultaneously with Zoe's sketching, Maskelyne executed his feat of Plate Dancing.

On May 31st, Monday afternoon, and subsequent afternoons Herr Adalbert Frikell appeared with his sleight of hand, and on June 23rd, Little Louie, a marvellous child clairvoyant (second sight) was added to the act. The Frikell season ended on August 21st.

July 7th saw for the first time a new musical apparatus described as the greatest mechanical mystery of the age. Brass musical instruments held by the audience in the centre of the hall, were made to play.

On October afternoons Duncan Miller's Royal Handbell Ringers were entertaining as was J. W. Benn with Blindfold Portraiture.

November 10th announced the last performance of Psycho on his 4000th performance. Maskelyne said the automaton in its original form remained a secret because a reward of £2,000 offered for four years for the correct imitation had not been claimed. The android was withdrawn to enable Maskelyne to add new effects.

So, on November 11th, there was the first production of yet another sketch: *The Temptations of Good St. Anthony* in which was introduced *Cleopatra's Needle,* a new illusion of Maskelyne's invention. The illusion consisted of producing three people from a small model of Cleopatra's Needle, this obelisk being on a raised platform. There were prefatory remarks by W. Morton, and the following characters were involved. Hansard was Saint Anthony; A. Bruce was Mephistopheles; Cooke was the Imp with the Trumpet Snout, and E. S. Elton was Imp Fair Lady.

Items popular in the preceding year continued well into 1881, when, on January 27th, Maskelyne amusingly announced he thought he deserved a few evenings at home. He had given nearly 5,000 consecutive performances. It should also be pointed out here that Cooke who had been with him all the

time was, in fact, fourteen years older than Maskelyne. So for a while there were no evening performances on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, although shows were given every afternoon.

On April 28th there was a revival of Will, the Witch, and this included Mystic Freaks of Gyges.

May 9th saw the end of the Temptations of St. Anthony and Cleopatra's Needle for a while, but it re-appeared in the Christmas programme when Egyptian Hall audiences could enjoy the Electric Organ, still directed by Mellon who played popular tunes of the day such as 'The Troop Ship', 'Homeward Bound', 'Sailor's Hornpipe', 'British Grenadiers' and 'Home Sweet Home'. After a lapse of eight years Will, the Witch was revived in which Maskelyne, Cooke, A. Bruce, Hansard and Elton played parts. Screvins in Two Pieces was also still in the bill, and Zoe, Fanfare and Labial continued to entertain.

Incidentally, at Christmas there were endless rival shows in London. Magic by Dr. Holden was to be seen at the Royal Polytechnic. Blondin the French tightrope walker who earlier in life had crossed the Niagara Falls by this precarious process, could be seen at the Alexandra Palace in North London.

CHAPTER FIVE

PICCADILLY GHOSTS

1882. IN THOSE VICTORIAN times many spiritualist meetings were held in London and elsewhere. When some seances which purported to be genuine were later found to be based on trickery for their so-called occult phenomena, J. N. Maskelyne was ever ready to expose deceit. No doubt because of this, fraud was parodied with unusual and uncanny effects at The Hall. Appropriately our diary records the following:

February 18th brought the first night audience to see the spiritualistic sketch which was then called *A Spirit Case or Mrs. Daffodil Downy's Light and Dark Seance*. The Piccadilly ghost, as it was called, was produced in a cloud of light. A ghost face appeared, a suspended violin played, and there was a distribution of snowdrops and gillyflowers among the audience. Maskelyne was versatile for he had also written a song for the show, entitled "The Spirits at Home", and this was sung by F. Clifton.

In the summer months the old favourites were to be seen such as the three automata, Screvins, exposure of the Davenport Brothers' so-called seance, Will, the Witch, Cleopatra's Needle, orchestra, Chinese plate spinning, Frank Lincoln (American humourist), Walter Pelham's reminiscences and impersonations, and *Mental Telegraphy*.

In the Light and Dark Seance, W. Crompton played the part of Sir Everleigh Staid (a rich widower); J. N. Maskelyne played Dr. Blade a spirit medium; Cooke played Morsel, Dr. Blade's assistant; J. Hansard played Mrs. Daffodil Downy (fair, fat and forty); and E. S. Elton was Phoebe (Mrs. Downy's maid). This sketch concluded with the animated and illuminated skeleton whose jaws rattled, head left his trunk and floated over the audience. According to the record of the time this feature occurred when "the gas had gone out".

On September 4th The Hall was again closed for re-decoration.

On September 9th Maskelyne and Cooke took their entertainment to the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, and were away until they re-opened at their London home on December 26th, when they again showed their automata and seance. An advertisement of December 21st described W. Morton as joint-proprietor and manager.

At the end of September the Large Hall was offered to let for October and November whilst they were on tour. On November 1st we find The Hall had been let to Frank Lincoln, American humourist, and Miss Minnie Bell billed as a reciter.

EGYPTIAN HALL.
MASKELYNE AND COOKE
ENGLAND'S HOME OF MYSTERY.
CLEMENT SMITH & CO. STEAM LITHOS
STAR YARD, CAREY ST. CLAIMS LABELS
EVERY EVENING AT 8, WEDNESDAY & SATURDAY AT 3 & 8.
SCREVINS IN TWO PIECES. THE SENSATION OF LONDON.

From the Jamieson Collection

A colourful Bill of the 'Decapitation Illusion'

For much of 1883 there is nothing new to report because the shows continued very much on the usual lines. In Mental Telegraphy, Maskelyne stood upon a sheet of glass in the centre of The Hall and did not speak or move. Words and numbers whispered to him by members of the audience were transmitted by thought to Zoe who immediately wrote them down.

In April it was announced that Maskelyne would commence his promised explanations of the various tricks performed by celebrated mediums, and also the *modus operandi* of the Davenport Brothers. I am unable to say exactly what these so-called exposures really were – maybe they were Maskelyne's normal performance without actually explaining "secrets".

The first fortnight in September found the Egyptian Hall closed for the annual vacation during which time G. A. Lubimoff's concerts and dramatic recitals were given.

From September 17th Maskelyne continued until the end of the year with the automata and seances.

On October 2nd Maskelyne wrote a letter from his private residence at Nevil House, Albert Road, Battersea Park, London (where he appears to have lived during most of his Egyptian Hall years), to Mr. Evanion. It read as follows:

"Dear Sir,

I regret I cannot come today. Could you arrange to bring your collection to The Hall one evening about 7 o'clock.

Yours very truly,
J. N. Maskelyne."

In another letter in the J. B. Findlay collection of Evanioniana is a reference to "playing cards which J. N. Maskelyne declined to purchase".

I was interested in the Home of Maskelyne at Battersea Park. Noel Maskelyne tells me much of his grandfather's work was done in the converted stables of his home. He travelled to the Egyptian Hall either in his own carriage, or by hansom cab, as convenient.

For a last note for that year, which may be of passing interest, Dr. Lynn was having a Christmas Season at the Crystal Palace.

After a successful Festive Season which continued on to February 18th, 1884, The Hall closed until Easter Monday. Then it was said that England's Home of Mystery was one of the safest places of amusement in London. To comply with the stringent requirements of the Metropolitan Board of Works, there had been fireproofing and structural improvements. There were two new spacious marble staircases, a new balcony with better exits, and the walls were cased with mirrors. Between the acts, the stage was screened from the audience with a new act drop, representing ancient Egyptian architecture. We are told there were new cloakrooms and lavatories. Whilst all these alterations were in progress, Maskelyne and Cooke were entertaining in the Albert Hall, Edinburgh.

From the Jamieson Collection

This bill, printed in several colours is not only rare, but also artistic with its floral decoration

Re-opening in London on April 14th was an important occasion which no doubt attracted good audiences, when Psycho, who had had intricate calculating mechanism added to it, re-appeared. It still played whist, could nod and smoke a cigarette. Its stage companion was Zoe. By the mental telegraphy of Maskelyne, Zoe wrote down a number given by the audience. Maskelyne asked Psycho to give the cube of that number, and it is said that in a few seconds the correct number was exhibited.

According to my late friend Herbert J. Collings, Mrs. Mead, who was J. N. Maskelyne's daughter, and who died about 1942, made a number of the costumes used in the magical sketches, as well as that worn by Psycho.

In July, Bruce and Verne offered music and ventriloquism; also showing was Elixir Vitae or Screvins, Daffodil Downy, and later plate dancing and the Box Trick.

September advertising mentions: "Proprietor J. N. Maskelyne and W. Morton as managing partner."

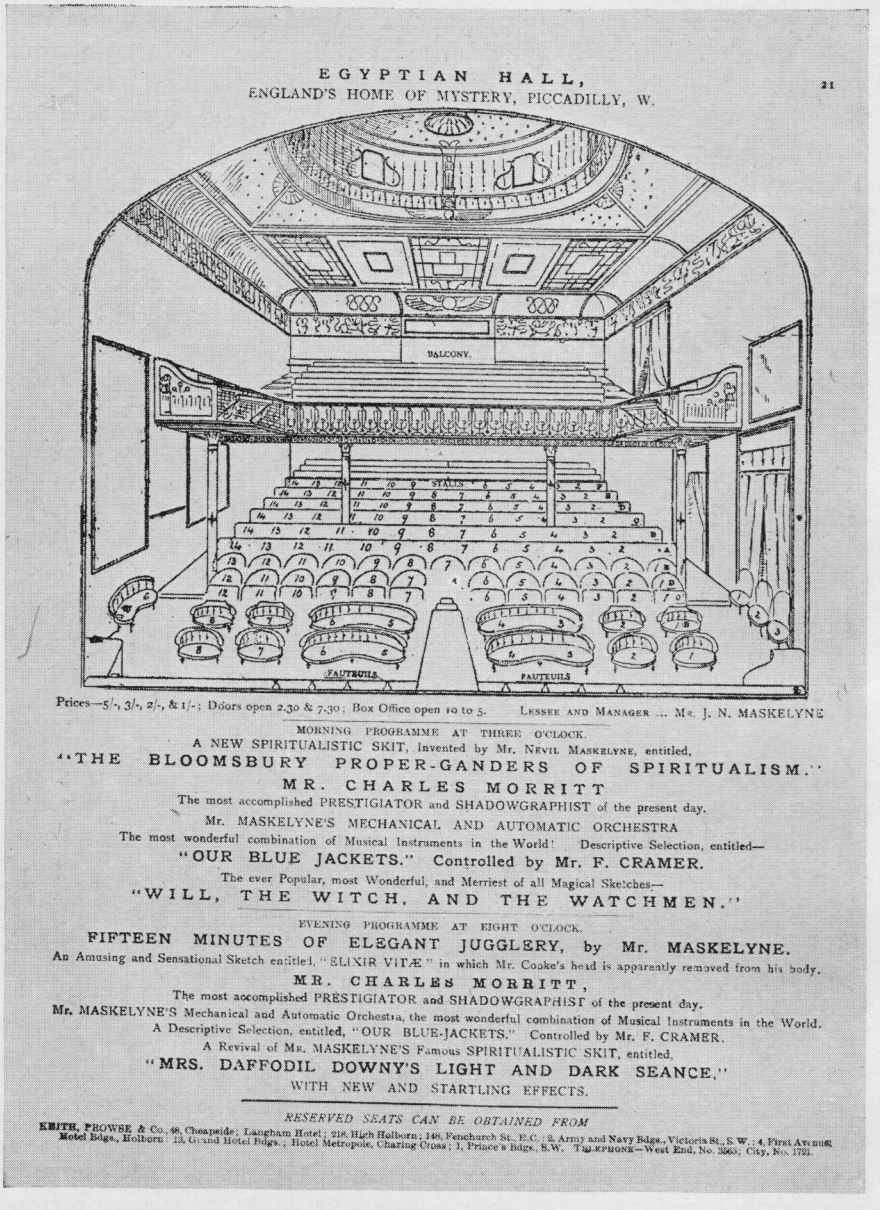
Newspapers were published on Christmas Day and those who read the theatre notices on that day would be invited to the Egyptian Hall on December 26th for the first production of a new illusory sketch entitled *The Fakirs of Benares* which included the sleep of the Nautch Girl. She was seen to be asleep in a hammock, but when the latter was lowered, the girl remained floating in the air. There was also a brazen oracle which was said to be the appearance of a real living head in a light cabinet isolated from all entrance of a human being. The scene for this sketch was that of a court in a Temple at Benares at the beginning of the century.

For much of 1885 Verbeck was presenting a rival conjuring entertainment at the nearby Princes Hall in Piccadilly, whilst from mid-March onwards until about June, Charles Bertram was conjuring at St. James's Hall. But Maskelyne and Cooke carried on with their well-tried successes. In the sketch Fakirs of Benares were to be seen the following characters: Lieut. Sim, played by Verne; Sergt. Plump, played by Crompton; Private O'Mizzle, played by Hansard; all these three were of the "Bengal Blazers"; Maskelyne played the part of Oollanc with Cooke as Rub Adub, each being fakirs; Elton was a dancing girl named Snoozinair.

J. N. Maskelyne's son Nevil first appeared as Dr. Blade in the sketch Mrs. Daffodil Downy's Seance.

In June and for the summer season, Maskelyne and Cooke performed every afternoon, but only on the evenings of Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

The Christmas shows commenced on December 17th, and the notable event then was the first appearance here of *Charles Bertram* at the matinee performance. Before a crowded audience his sleight of hand involved effects with cards, coins and handkerchiefs. At that time Bertram explained some tricks for the benefit of boys home for their holidays. Performances differed in the evenings.



EGYPTIAN HALL,

ENGLAND'S HOME OF MYSTERY, PICCADILLY, W.

21

BALCONY.

STALLS

FAUTEUILS

FAUTEUILS

Prices—5/-, 3/-, 2/-, & 1/-; Doors open 2.30 & 7.30; Box Office open 10 to 5. LESSEE AND MANAGER ... MR. J. N. MASKELYNE

MORNING PROGRAMME AT THREE O'CLOCK.

A NEW SPIRITUALISTIC SKIT, Invented by Mr. NEVIL MASKELYNE, entitled,

"THE BLOOMSBURY PROPER-GANDERS OF SPIRITUALISM."

MR. CHARLES MORRITT

The most accomplished PRESTIGIATOR and SHADOWGRAPHIST of the present day.

Mr. MASKELYNE'S MECHANICAL AND AUTOMATIC ORCHESTRA

The most wonderful combination of Musical Instruments in the World! Descriptive Selection, entitled—

"OUR BLUE JACKETS." Controlled by Mr. F. CRAMER.

The ever Popular, most Wonderful, and Merriest of all Magical Sketches—

"WILL, THE WITCH, AND THE WATCHMEN."

EVENING PROGRAMME AT EIGHT O'CLOCK.

FIFTEEN MINUTES OF ELEGANT JUGGLERY, by Mr. MASKELYNE.

An Amusing and Sensational Sketch entitled, "ELIXIR VITÆ" in which Mr. Cooke's head is apparently removed from his body.

MR. CHARLES MORRITT,

The most accomplished PRESTIGIATOR and SHADOWGRAPHIST of the present day.

Mr. MASKELYNE'S Mechanical and Automatic Orchestra, the most wonderful combination of Musical Instruments in the World.

A Descriptive Selection, entitled, "OUR BLUE-JACKETS." Controlled by Mr. F. CRAMER.

A Revival of MR. MASKELYNE'S Famous SPIRITUALISTIC SKIT, entitled,

"MRS. DAFFODIL DOWNY'S LIGHT AND DARK SEANCE,"

WITH NEW AND STARTLING EFFECTS.

RESERVED SEATS CAN BE OBTAINED FROM

KEITH, PROWSE & Co., 48, Cheapside; Langham Hotel; 218, High Holborn; 148, Fenchurch St., E.C.; 2, Army and Navy Bdgs., Victoria St., S.W.; 4, First Avenue Hotel Bdgs., Holborn; 13, Grand Hotel Bdgs.; Hotel Metropole, Charing Cross; 1, Prince's Bdgs., S.W. TELEPHONE—West End, No. 3563; City, No. 1721.

Advertisement from the "Box Office and Entertainment Guide". This gives a good idea of the seating. Interior illustrations of the Egyptian Hall of Maskelyne and Cooke are rare

Zoe and Mental Telegraphy still found a place in the programmes and new illusions were added to the sketch Will, the Witch.

H. Verne, ventriloquist, was on the bill. Sitting at the keys of an harmonium was Charles Mellon directing the mechanical orchestra. He made drums beat, cornets play, bells ring, and generally filled the hall with musical sounds.

About that time and later the name of manager W. Morton ceases to appear on the programmes in my possession.

One must acknowledge indebtedness to *Punch* for the following contemporary observation.

"AMONG THE MAGICIANS

On quitting the room in the Egyptian Hall where M. Munkacsy's grand picture is on view, the sound of strange unmusical instruments struck our ear, and on interrogating a talking-head in a box – everything is more or less weird in the Egyptian Hall – we received the oracular answer that the Egyptian Magicians, Messrs. Maskelyne and Cooke, were giving their seance in the room on the right. Nerving ourselves for the effort, we entered the Cave of Enchantment, and – were enchanted. There, sure enough, were the great Professors as Fakeers, doing their fakements: a stalwart female form was suspended on nothing in the air, the Magicians walking right round her the while. Then came the Cabinet trick, which was not political, but magical. These "illusions" are introduced in the course of two short thrilling dramas, in which, as there are no Ladies employed, the men appear as women, and very cleverly they do it, though we venture to think that the necessity for men assuming petticoats is not evident. It is explained, however, by its being a performance of a Maskelyne character, Mr. Cooke being a Man-cook, and in his line a cordon bleu.

Then there is a gentleman who gives a sort of entertainment after the style of Mr. Corney Grain, and who, as far as his little doll "Sally" goes, would be as clever a ventriloquist as Lieutenant Cole, if the latter were not simply perfect. The dark seance is marvellous, and so let it remain; we don't want to know "how it's done", nor should we attempt to even if it were all explained to us, and we were presented with a box of tricks gratis. Messrs. Maskelyne and Cooke, like many other people, keep a skeleton in a cupboard – one skeleton between them – but they let it out; and when it does come out, to see the way it behaves is sufficient reason for shutting it up again as soon as possible. It is so proud, that it passes most of its time in tossing its head in the air, as if the audience were not good enough for its society. Then it goes mad, and loses his head altogether. Finally, it behaves like a bankrupt Club – its members separate, the head one way, the body another, the arms to the right, and the legs to the left, and up go the lights – not the skeleton's, but the room's – and the proprietors bow their acknowledgments in return for well deserved applause, while the pianist, who being at it twice a day every week of his life, probably plays throughout the performance in his sleep – unless he is one of Messrs. Maskelyne and

Cooke's automata, which is more than probable – strikes up gleefully the National Anthem as a signal for us all to clear out, which we did."

CHAPTER SIX

THE LADY VANISHES

IN 1886, JUST A YEAR before Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, successful publicity continued to attract audiences, and the Maskelyne and Cooke shows were frequently well reported in the papers. It is difficult today to recapture the air of mystery that must have prevailed in that comparatively small Egyptian Hall with its tiny stage. Magic was being brewed for their fourteenth year at that venue.

For those who were unable to visit the Egyptian Hall at Christmas, there were many opportunities during the first half of that year. The gas light was lowered and flashes of lightning accompanied the automatic orchestra, and familiar programmes continued for many weeks.

April 24th records the first appearance of Marvelle's trained cockatoos. Bertram was producing Tom Smith's Easter Eggs for the children.

In May there were two different programmes each day. In the afternoons one could have seen Elixir, Bertram and Will, the Witch, whilst the evening performances included the Automata, Mental Telegraphy, Verne, Seance and Mechanical Orchestra.

Saturday, August 7th saw the first production here of *Buatier de Kolta's* "*L'Escamotage en personne vivante*" (The Vanishing Lady). Because the originator was still successfully presenting this illusion in Paris, it was not until Christmas that he would be at The Hall in person. And so it was that Charles Bertram presented that mystery, assisted by Mlle Patrice, the wife of C. Lang Neil. A newspaper was spread over the floor on which rested the lady seated on a chair. A light covering was put over her, and then quickly removed. The lady had vanished. Later she was led on to the stage.

The Maskelyne and Cooke season ended on September 25th and they did not re-appear at the Egyptian Hall until Christmas time.

Between October and mid-December they went on tour, appearing at Bournemouth, Southampton, Salisbury, Clifton, Bath, Cheltenham and Maidstone.

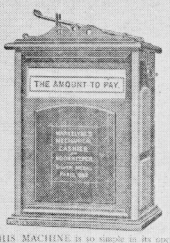
However, during October and November our great grandfathers were not without their magic at the Egyptian Hall because Bertram carried on at that time with the presentation of the Vanishing Lady and his own sleight of hand. His bills contained musical interludes by Ernest Walcot and Fleming Norton.

One could still buy the *Daily Telegraph* for one penny, and almost every day the paper contained announcements on the front page from Maskelyne and Cooke. If one's eyes strayed to other private advertisements on November

MASKELYNE'S MECHANICAL CASHIER

And BOOK-KEEPER.

Size 24 Inches High, 17 Inches Wide.



Size 13 Inches from Back to Front.

A BOON TO SHOP-KEEPERS

Saves Time.

Renders Peculation impossible without detection.

Relieves Honest Assistants from Suspicion.

Protects Customers against Overcharge.

And Records each Payment Separately.

Best all Competitors at the

PARIS EXHIBITION!

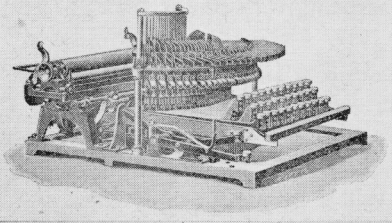
Receiving the Highest Award given for Cash Registering Apparatus.

THIS MACHINE is so simple in its operation that a child 12 years of age can be taught to use it in ten minutes, and can do the work of two or three Clerks. Above is an illustration of a Cashier to register amounts under £100. The setting of the Indicators to the amount required to be registered occupies but two or three seconds of time, which a simple depression of the lever prints a receipt stating the amount paid, with the words "Received with thanks" and the date. The same depression of the lever also prints a record of the transaction inside the Machine. It removes a shutter in front, exhibiting the amount in large figures. It opens a till to receive the cash, and strikes a gong announcing the completion of the operation.

PRICE LIST.—Cashiers to register amounts under One Hundred Pounds, as Illustrated, £24. The same Machine, to register sums under Ten Pounds, £16. Large Tills, to fit beneath the counter, opening automatically each time the Machine is used, 35/ each.

ALL MACHINES ARE GUARANTEED FOR ONE YEAR.

THE MASKELYNE TYPE-WRITER.



Will shortly be placed upon the Market.

The most perfect WRITING MACHINE yet produced.

Entirely New in Principle, no Ink Ribbon required.

Differential Spacing 96 characters, each visible to the Operator the moment it is printed.

Almost noiseless in operation.

THROAT & COUGH: EPPS'S GLYCERINE JUJUBES. (Sample Boxes, Homœopathic Pharmacy, Egyptian Hall.)

EGYPTIAN HALL, LONDON.

England's Home of Mystery!

1892

Messrs.

Maskelyne AND Cooke's

Entertainment.

SOLE PROPRIETOR—MR. J. N. MASKELYNE.

20TH CONSECUTIVE YEAR IN LONDON.

Programme.

EPPS'S GLYCERINE JUJUBES: THROAT & COUGH. (Sample Boxes, Homœopathic Pharmacy, Egyptian Hall.)

COVER

Morning Programme, at 3 o'clock.

Fifteen Minutes of ELEGANT JUGGLERY, by Mr. Maskelyne.

New Psychological and Mathematical Problems,

By Mr. & Miss MORRITT.

An original system of apparent SILENT THOUGHT TRANSMISSION, discovered by Mr. MORRITT, and performed by no other artists. None attempts have been made to imitate this marvellous performance with confederates upon the stage, and amongst the audience, also by conveying signs by pretended mesmeric passes. To prove the absence of such trickery, the Performers will submit to any reasonable test suggested by the audience.

A series of ORIGINAL EXPERIMENTS in pure Sleight-of-hand, a display of digital manipulation, surpassing anything hitherto accomplished by the most famous Conjurors.

Pianoforte Selection - - - - Mr. Francois Cramer.

A NEW & ORIGINAL MYSTERY, entitled **"Oh!!!"**

The joint invention of Mr. NEVIL MASKELYNE and Mr. CHARLES MORRITT.

A HUMAN BEING passed invisibly through space whilst secured and held by Members of the Audience.

A Series of WONDERFUL and LAUGHABLE SHADOW PICTURES,

By Mr. MORRITT.

MR. MASKELYNE'S MECHANICAL & AUTOMATIC ORCHESTRA

The most wonderful combination of Musical Instruments in the world!

Controlled by Mr. F. CRAMER.

A Descriptive Selection, entitled "OUR BLUE-JACKETS."

SYNOPSIS.—Sailors Embarking.—"Hearts of Oak."—"The Anchor's Weigh'd."—Jollity on Board.—"A Life on the Ocean Wave."—"The Sailor's Hornpipe."—Night-fall.—"Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep."—A Storm rising.—Thunder, Lightning, Hail, Wind, &c., &c.—"The Bay of Biscay."—Return to Old England.—Church Bells.—"Home, Sweet Home."—"Rule Britannia."

A NEW SPIRITUALISTIC SKIT,

Invented by Mr. NEVIL MASKELYNE, entitled

"The Bloomsbury Proper-ganders of Spiritualism."

Professor Cranks, F.R.S., A.S.S., &c., (Chairman of the *Proper-ganders*) ..... Mr. J. HANSARD

Caleb Kipper (A Spirit Medium) ..... Mr. NEVIL MASKELYNE

The Bloomsbury *Proper-ganders* ..... CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE

Evening Programme, at 8 o'clock.

An amusing & sensational Sketch, entitled "Elixir Vitæ,"

In which Mr. Cooke's head is apparently removed from his body.

Dr. Bolus (Quack) ..... Mr. J. N. MASKELYNE.

Screwins (Gloucestershire Farmer) ..... Mr. G. A. COOKE.

Senmacherib (Page) ..... Mr. W. F. BROOKE.

The Illusions are so ingeniously arranged that they are exceedingly amusing, and in no way repulsive.

MR. CHARLES MORRITT,

The most accomplished Prestigiator of the present day,

Will perform a series of ORIGINAL EXPERIMENTS in pure Sleight-of-hand,

A display of skilful digital manipulation, surpassing everything hitherto accomplished by the most famous Conjurors.

Pianoforte Selection - - - - - Mr. Francois Cramer.

A New and Original Mystery, entitled "OH!!!"

The joint invention of Mr. NEVIL MASKELYNE and Mr. CHARLES MORRITT.

A HUMAN BEING passed invisibly through space whilst secured and held by Members of the Audience.

A SERIES of WONDERFUL and LAUGHABLE SHADOW PICTURES, by Mr. Morritt.

MR. MASKELYNE'S MECHANICAL & AUTOMATIC ORCHESTRA,

The most wonderful combination of Musical Instruments in the world!

Controlled by Mr. F. CRAMER.

A Descriptive Selection, entitled "OUR BLUE-JACKETS."

SYNOPSIS.—Sailors Embarking.—"Hearts of Oak."—"The Anchor's Weigh'd."—Jollity on Board.—"A Life on the Ocean Wave."—"The Sailors' Hornpipe."—Night-fall.—"Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep."—"A Storm rising."—Thunder, Lightning, Hail, Wind, &c., &c.—"The Bay of Biscay."—Return to Old England.—Church Bells.—"Home, Sweet Home."—"Rule Britannia."

A revival of Mr. MASKELYNE'S Sensational Sketch, entitled

Mrs. Daffodil Downy's Light and Dark Seance,

WITH NEW AND STARTLING EFFECTS.

Dr. Blade (a Spiritualist) ..... Mr. NEVIL MASKELYNE.

Morsel (a Spirit Medium) ..... Mr. G. A. COOKE.

Sir Everleigh Staid ..... Mr. J. B. HANSARD.

James ..... Mr. W. F. BROOKE.

Mrs. Daffodil Downy ..... Miss L. MORRITT.

Mr. & Miss Morritt can accept Private Engagements in Town, at hours that will not interfere with their appearances at the Egyptian Hall. For terms, &c., apply to Mr. J. N. Maskelyne.

ROBERTS-BROWN, PRINTER, MAIDSTONE.

INSIDE

Programme for 1892. Note advertisement for some of Maskelyne's commercial inventions

18th, one would have seen an illusion offered by someone in Drury Lane. For sale was a marble bust which "changed to life and back again". It could be seen any evening between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m.

On November 20th the Bertram season ended, and The Hall was again closed for structural improvement and decoration.

December 23rd saw the return of Maskelyne and Cooke after their tour, and patrons found The Hall decorated in Egyptian fashion – and a good programme for their enjoyment. There was Mellon with the orchestra; jugglery by J. N. Maskelyne; Will, the Witch, in which Nevil Maskelyne played Daddy Gnarl (Head of the Watch); W. F. Brooke played Miles Mooney (an Irish watchman); J. N. Maskelyne played the dual roles of Joe Killbull (a Gloucestershire butcher) and the Witch of the Village; G. A. Cooke also played dual roles of Will Constant a sailor, and the Gorilla; and Miss Ada Ardley was Dolly (in love with Will).

But the most important event was the personal appearance of Buatier de Kolta with Madame de Kolta, in *Modern Black Magic*. On the darkened stage he called upon the spirits, and there suddenly appeared a white robed figure who advanced to the footlights. A sheet was discarded, and so revealed Madame Buatier de Kolta in the robe of a Grecian woman. Interesting is the following quotation from the programme:

> "Modern Black Magic is absolutely presented in the full light of the room, but from the peculiar aspect of the Stage it is usually thought that the light is diminished."

The Vanishing Lady was also presented. The illusions were then described as being on an entirely new principle. Announced as the famous Hungarian magician he also showed *Les Problemes Fantastiques*.

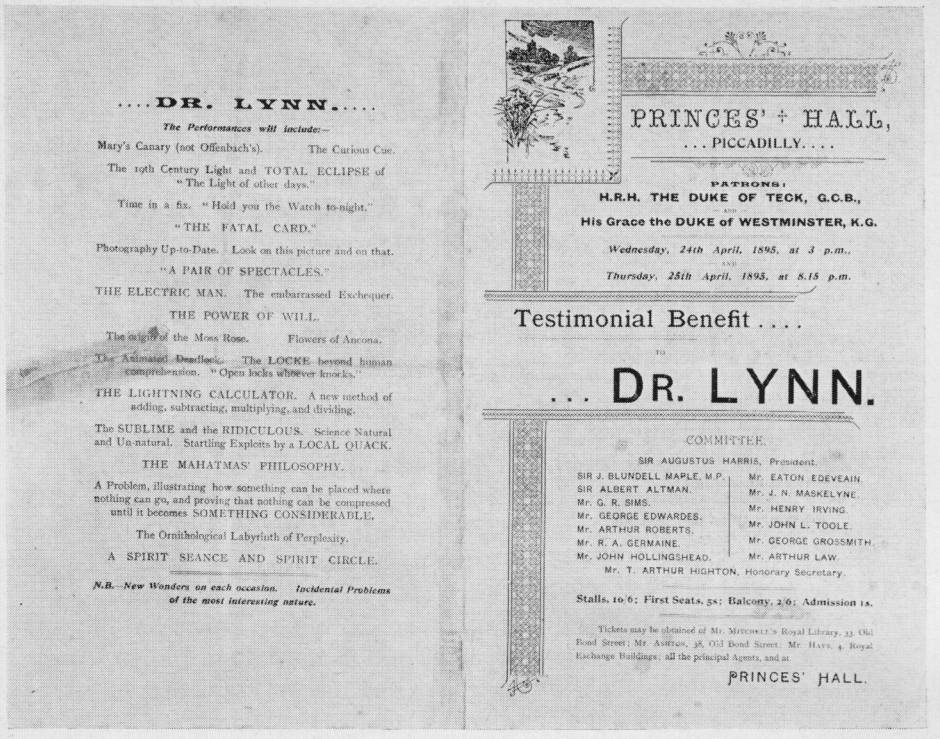
During most of that year Verbeck continued with his rival conjuring show in Piccadilly.

1887. The previous Christmas entertainment continued for many weeks with De Kolta and his Modern Black Magic. This included the mysterious tapping hand resting on a sheet of glass supported by the backs of two chairs.

Following their custom, Maskelyne and Cooke closed the Egyptian Hall during Holy Week.

May 2nd was an important occasion when Buatier de Kolta produced for the first time, in any country, his beautiful illusion called *Le Cocon*. A paper framework, about three feet by two was suspended from a line, and on this the performer painted a picture of a silkworm. From this isolated picture was magically produced a large golden silk cocoon, which was then lowered on to a stand. From the cocoon emerged a lady, in the raiment of a moth.

The summer vacation was early this year for The Hall re-opened on August 1st. On that occasion there was ventriloquism by Verne, Madam Schultz played the Hungarian Cimbal, and the Cocoon illusion was still there for the enjoyment and amazement of the August holiday-makers.



....DR. LYNN....

The Performances will include:—

Mary's Canary (not Offenbach's). The Curious Cue.

The 19th Century Light and TOTAL ECLIPSE of "The Light of other days."

Time in a fix. "Hold you the Watch to-night."

"THE FATAL CARD."

Photography Up-to-Date. Look on this picture and on that.

"A PAIR OF SPECTACLES."

THE ELECTRIC MAN. The embarrassed Exchequer.

THE POWER OF WILL.

The origin of the Moss Rose. Flowers of Ancona.

The Animated Deadlock. The LOCKE beyond human comprehension. "Open locks wherever knocks."

THE LIGHTNING CALCULATOR. A new method of adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing.

The SUBLIME and the RIDICULOUS. Science Natural and Un-natural. Startling Exploits by a LOCAL QUACK.

THE MAHATMAS' PHILOSOPHY.

A Problem, illustrating how something can be placed where nothing can go, and proving that nothing can be compressed until it becomes SOMETHING CONSIDERABLE.

The Ornithological Labyrinth of Perplexity.

A SPIRIT SEANCE AND SPIRIT CIRCLE.

N.B.—New Wonders on each occasion. Incidental Problems of the most interesting nature.

PRINCES' HALL,

... PICCADILLY....

PATRONS:

H.R.H. THE DUKE OF TECK, G.C.B.,

AND

His Grace the DUKE of WESTMINSTER, K.G.

Wednesday, 24th April, 1895, at 3 p.m.,

AND

Thursday, 25th April, 1895, at 8.15 p.m.

Testimonial Benefit ....

TO

... DR. LYNN.

COMMITTEE.

SIR AUGUSTUS HARRIS, President.

SIR J. BLUNDELL MAPLE, M.P. — Mr. EATON EDEVEAIN.
SIR ALBERT ALTMAN. — Mr. J. N. MASKELYNE.
Mr. G. R. SIMS. — Mr. HENRY IRVING.
Mr. GEORGE EDWARDES. — Mr. JOHN L. TOOLE.
Mr. ARTHUR ROBERTS. — Mr. GEORGE GROSSMITH.
Mr. R. A. GERMAINE. — Mr. ARTHUR LAW.
Mr. JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

Mr. T. ARTHUR HIGHTON, Honorary Secretary.

Stalls, 10/6; First Seats, 5s; Balcony, 2/6; Admission 1s.

Tickets may be obtained of Mr. MITCHELL'S Royal Library, 33 Old Bond Street; Mr. ASHTON, 38, Old Bond Street, Mr. HAYS, 4, Royal Exchange Buildings; all the principal Agents, and at

PRINCES' HALL.

COVER

PROGRAMME.

..... The following eminent Artistes will appear on behalf of Dr. LYNN:— .....

Miss GENEVIEVE WARD
Will recite "Widow of Glencoe."

Miss KITTY LOFTUS
AND
Mr. ARTHUR ROBERTS
Will sing the Duet "Sweethearts" from "Gentleman Joe."

Miss CLARA ADDISON
Will sing (by kind permission of Sir AUGUSTUS HARRIS) "Through Fairy Land," and "Songs we used to sing."

Dr. LYNN
Will illustrate an illusory problem, proving that something can be placed where nothing can go, and that nothing can be compressed until it becomes **something considerable.**

Miss PATON
Will sing "Bird of the Springtime" by *Alberto Randegger*, and Duet with SIGNOR PALMIERI "Una Notte a Venezia" (A Night in Venice) by *Lucantoni*.

Signor ERNESTO PALMIERI.

Miss FLORENCE SHEE
Will sing "Les filles de Cadiz" by *Tosti*.

Mr. TEMPLAR SAXE
Will sing new Song, "In Passionate Surrender" by *Henry Hamilton*, Music by *Frederic Rosse*, accompanied by the Composer.

Mr. J. N. MASKELYNE
Will introduce one of his celebrated Sketches.

Mr. REGINALD LEYLAND
Will give his Musical Sketch, "The Italian Opera."

Miss MAY PINNEY
AND
Mr. TEMPLAR SAXE
Will sing "Elle et Lui" a new song cycle, words by *F. Weatherley*, Music by *Guy d'Hardelot*. The Composer has kindly consented to accompany.

Mr. JOHN LE HAY
Has kindly promised to give a Ventriloquial Sketch

Mr. CHARLES KENNINGHAM
Will sing one of his own compositions.

Mr. MAURICE FARKOA
(By kind permission of GEORGE EDWARDES, Esq.) will sing "Laughing Song."

Miss PATON
Will recite "The Victim," by *Tennyson*.

Mr. R. A. ROBERTS
Facial Portraitures (by kind permission of Mr. J. N. MASKELYNE).

Mr. JOHN JOLLY NASH.

Mr. TEMPLAR SAXE has kindly undertaken to superintend the Musical arrangements.

MADAME MERA will preside at the Piano.

INSIDE

From the Jamieson Collection

Rare programme for a Benefit show to DR. LYNN at the Princes' Hall, Piccadilly. J. N. Maskelyne introduced one of his sketches

October 22nd was the last day of showing Le Cocon. The horse-drawn carriages were still a mode of London transport, and some of them drew up for the Maskelyne and Cooke show on November 5th. On this Guy Fawkes day there may have been fireworks elsewhere. But in England's Home of Mystery patrons saw the first production of another sketch called *Arcana*, which had for its setting the garden of Zanymann's Villa at Sydenham. Nevil Maskelyne was Zanymann; J. N. Maskelyne was Tom Pheon (Mephisto); H. Verne was Philip Drew; G. A. Cooke was Old Digby, a gardener; W. F. Brooke was Moses a Tailor; and Miss Ada Ardley was Magneta Zanymann. The sketch dealt with the desire of Van Zanymann to re-animate a dead body. Through a device of Philip Drew who was in love with Magneta, a tailor's dummy (played by Brooke), was made to do duty for a deceased man, and this was suddenly transformed into Mephisto. The mysterious appearance of Philip Drew was said at the time to be the most difficult illusion ever introduced. It was the production of a "lover" from nowhere. The sketch included a mechanical blackbird which hopped and flew.

Arcana continued, and at Christmas Cleopatra's Needle was revived with new illusions, and introduced by Nevil Maskelyne. J. Hansard played the part of Anthony and Brooke was principal Imp. Will, the Witch was again being shown in Maskelyne and Cooke's fifteenth year in London.

1888. As we turn the pages of this history, it is noticed that the pattern of the entertainment did not change very much, for Arcana continued for at least eight months, augmented by most of the familiar items of the previous year. Fresh patrons were coming along all the time. Even eighty years ago London had a great floating population eager to sample the Capital's attractions.

That Maskelyne was endowed with a sense of humour, is I think, indicated by the names given to the characters in his sketches, and this is confirmed by the "admission price" announcement that children were half price and babies ten guineas each.

That year the vacation was from July 9th to August 6th and after a few weeks the Maskelyne and Cooke London season ended on September 20th. For those who wished for magic in July they could have seen Carl Hertz at the Royal, Holborn.

In October and November the Maskelyne and Cooke Company went on tour, and played at the Opera House, Liverpool, and the Free Trade Hall, Manchester.

On September 29th, by arrangement with Maskelyne, *Hercat* began a season at the Egyptian Hall which ran for several weeks. Hercat was an illusionist and ventriloquist, his shows ran for about two hours. The piano overture was by Hubert Delma and was followed by Hercat's magical melange which included the growth of real flowers, card magic, coffee, milk and sugar from fairyland, the spirit hand, sleight of hand, and a magic hat. His ventriloquial act was called a "Cure for the Blues". The performance ended with a startling illusion

From the Jamieson Collection

Early Cinema history becomes real in studying this rare Maskelyne & Cooke showcard
Note Nevil Maskelyne's projector, the Mutagraph

the "Mystery of She" in which Ayesha, the famous Rider Haggard character was played by Miss Fay Rivington. The ashes of Ayesha were burnt and "She" arose from the flames. Such was the programmed description.

December 17th was the day on which Maskelyne and Cooke returned to the Egyptian Hall. On that occasion, and for the first time, they presented a new spiritualistic sketch invented by Nevil Maskelyne entitled *Bloomsbury Proper-Ganders of Spiritualism.*

Contributing to the Christmas programmes was the sleight of hand of Charles Bertram and the playlet Will, the Witch.

In 1889 the new sketch on spiritualism continued its run for months. It involved mysterious spiritualistic effects inside a small cabinet mounted on a raised glass platform. Nevil Maskelyne played the part of spirit medium Caleb Kipper; J. Hansard played Professor Cranks who was chairman of the Bloomsbury Proper-ganders. The latter were certain members of the audience. J. N. Maskelyne again presented his dexterous plate dancing, and Mellon still controlled the mechanical orchestra.

June 8th found Robert Ganthony entertaining with conjuring and ventriloquism. An interesting feature of this act was the playing of Edison's latest phonograph.

The annual vacation commenced on July 15th.

At the re-opening on August 5th, holiday-makers found a strong bill awaiting them. The Sketch of the year continued, as did Robert Ganthony and the Orchestra.

The new feature on that occasion was *Charles Morritt and his sister Lilian* who were billed as presenting wonderful psychological and mathematical problems. These were feats of thought-reading.

On October 21st, Dr. Holden, the court magician, was to be seen at The Hall, where he remained for about a month. His magic was of the drawing-room type, being with cards, coins and so on.

There were now many rival shows in London, as for instance P. T. Barnum with the "greatest show on earth" which opened at the Olympia on November 11th. Hercat was at the Gallery of Mystery, situated at the corner of Dean Street and Oxford Street, and he remained there for the rest of the year.

Maskelyne and Cooke commenced their Christmas season on December 15th when Will the, Witch featured, and Morritt was still included in the show. There was a slight variation in the programmes but they all included the old favourites. Along Piccadilly at 5.15 p.m. and 10.15 p.m. to the Egyptian Hall came the carriages with trotting horses and liveried coachmen in top hats, to take home the more fortunate of the mystified patrons.

There was little change in the Maskelyne and Cooke programmes in 1890. The senior Maskelyne was still plate spinning, and the Morritts thought-reading. In that act some chess experiments were gone through, showing the lady's skill in divining what was in progress whilst her eyes were bandaged. Mellon still produced the effects for the automatic orchestra.

Through the years, there were changes in the actors playing in the sketches, and that year Miss Morritt took the part of Dolly in Will, the Witch.

From September to Christmas could be seen the Proper-ganders, Elixir Vitae and plate dancing. The orchestra had a new effect called the Cymaphone.

Those who had seen all this before and wanted a change of venue could have seen the magic of Imro Fox at the Royal, Holborn. They could have dined at what was described as the most elegant restaurant in Town – the Cafe Florio in the Strand, where a dinner was offered at the low price of three shillings and sixpence.

For Christmas holidays two distinct programmes were given by ringing the changes on well tried mysteries.

In the early part of 1891 there was but little change. Morritt was presenting handshadows in February, together with sleight of hand, giving forty surprises in twenty minutes. As previously Maskelyne had to contend with rival shows. There was Servais Le Roy at the London Pavilion, Carl Hertz at the Alhambra, and Hercat at the Cagliostromantheon which was in Cockspur Street. These were a few of the contemporary entertainers.

May 9th brought a change of programmes when it was announced Buatier de Kolta had been secured at great expense. With arms bared he held a cage containing a paraquet, and both vanished instantly. An illusion called the *Captive's Flight* was also shown. His wife was placed in a cage, and both vanished. She had been attired to look like a dove. De Kolta remained at The Hall until just prior to Maskelyne and Cooke's annual vacation, after which they re-opened on July 13th.

September 29th saw the first production of the illusion *Oh* under the title of *The Mahatmas Outdone*. It was the joint invention of Nevil Maskelyne and Charles Morritt. In this a man was seated in a slender cabinet which had curtained sides, and although he seemed securely held by the hand and his legs strapped (with one hand tied to a cord held by an observer), he vanished. He eventually re-appeared in the auditorium. An advance notice of this effect was announced by Maskelyne as follows:

> "On Monday The Hall will be closed to the public and kept in Egyptian Darkness, the day being set apart for the special training and self-denial of the performers, to render them in a fit frame of mind to receive a knowledge of the secret forms of nature, etc. etc. J. N. Maskelyne, President of the Mystical Society of the Egyptian Hall adepts in Occultism . . . Caution . . . This is the original and only genuine miracle society extant. All are invited to join the outer or paying circle, irrespective of creed, caste, sex, size or weight. Entrance fees strictly moderate."

Elton was the one who vanished. Morritt was still giving sleight of hand and shadows. The Christmas shows included the new illusion.

In 1892, an unexpected January advertisement read, "How to avoid influenza . . . Visit the Egyptian Hall, the most cosy, comfortable and best ventilated place of entertainment in London".

At that time, and continuing until about the end of May could still be seen Morritt, Oh, Proper-ganders, Light and Dark Seance and the automatic orchestra. However, in May, Oh was not presented on Saturday nights and Mondays.

At this time during the week ending June 4th, DAVID DEVANT, who was later to join the Maskelynes, was at the London Pavilion as an act in a variety show.

The Egyptian Hall was closed from July 4th and re-opened on August 8th. A contemporary note tells us there had been important structural alterations by David Laing & Son (Architect J. G. Buckle). There was a new fireproof proscenium constructed with Johnson's patent wire mesh, and iron framing of an Egyptian design. Furnishings were by Campbell Smith & Co., Gas and Electric Lighting by Freeman & Co., Fire appliances by Merryweather & Sons, and new scenery by J. T. Bull & Son.

From August 8th to October 8th *James Stuart* entertained by sleight of hand the restoration of a mutilated borrowed handkerchief, and caused a watch to wander magically. This performer, born in Birkenhead in 1865 was an author, composer and musician, and died at the age of 36 in 1901.

October 10th records the first appearance here of *Douglas Beaufort* with an act which lasted about half-an-hour. It was a magical musical interlude called "My Journey to Fez", and related anecdotes of the journey. He presented items he had performed before the Emperor of Morocco. Effects shown were those of changing silver coins into gold, tricks with cards, paper, and sealed envelopes whose contents apparently changed from what was thought to be in them, and other small effects. Other features on the bill were the Bloomsbury Proper-ganders, automatic orchestra controlled by F. Cramer, and Elixir Vitae (decapitation of Cooke).

In November, according to my unfolding chronicle, Morritt was now a rival of Maskelyne, giving a full entertainment at the nearby Princes Hall.

New to the Egyptian Hall on December 19th was the animal trainer *Louis Duprez* who presented a trio of dogs, as follows. "Mlle. Nell" and "Dr. Bingo" picked out desired numbers, and "Colonel Spot" adding the sum, chose one representing the total. "Nell" found four coloured handkerchiefs in the order requested by an audience helper. "Colonel Spot" found a selected playing card. Finally, "Nell" vanished from a box into which she had been put. The act was known as a trio of *Canine Conjurers*.

Beaufort finished just before Christmas, although the dogs remained on the holiday programme, which also included Arcana, Proper-ganders, and Verne.

If at that time one had a bad throat or cough, Epp's sample boxes of Glycerine Jujubes could be had from their Egyptian Hall Homoepathic Pharmacy.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DAVID DEVANT

THE YEAR 1893 must be considered a red letter one in the annals of the Egyptian Hall for it was then that the famous *David Devant* made his first appearance with the show, eventually to become a partner with Maskelyne.

In 1924 it was my pleasure and privilege to visit Devant in his own home at 17 Belsize Avenue, Hampstead in North London. Around his fireside he told me something of his early life, of how he commenced by purchasing in Oxford Street an egg that would disappear. He was self-taught. In those far-off days he expressed views that are still truths today. He said "magic is always popular when well done, but unfinished performances lacking proper showmanship harm magic".

The Master died on October 13th, 1941, aged 73. after long years of illness, leaving behind gems of magical memories.

At The Hall there was little change of programme until March 6th when *M. B. Spurr*, an accomplished and versatile "literary and musical" entertainer, made his first appearance in London. Also at that time *Mons. Alban and Mlle. Stella* made their first appearance in England at the Egyptian Hall, after successful entertaining on the Continent. Their act was programmed as *Psychological Experiments*. Alban remained on the stage blindfolded whilst Stella went amongst the audience. Stella pictured in her mind the features of a celebrity selected from a long list of many hundreds. No words were spoken, yet Alban, still blindfolded, immediately drew on a blackboard the portrait of the selected person. Stella was asked by an audience member to think of a musical instrument, and Alban then imitated its sounds. Stella was asked to think of an animal. and Alban then imitated its cry or movements. The partners then exchanged places, Stella taking the stage whilst Alban went amongst the audience. By so-called thought-reading, articles were described and arithmetical calculations made.

Arcana was also being presented with mainly the same performers as on the first occasion excepting that Miss Olive Elton now played the part of Magneta Zanymann. The Bloomsbury Proper-ganders, automatic orchestra and the Light and Dark Seance (Mrs. Daffodil) probably continued with minor changes until the annual vacation which commenced on June 26th.

When Maskelyne and Cooke re-opened on July 10th they made the following announcement:

"It is a curious coincidence that this extraordinary entertainment should attain its majority at the Egyptian Hall in the year 1893. Add 1, 8, 9 and 3 together and the total turns out 21". This was their 21st consecutive year in London. September 4th tells of important additions to the programme. They were *David Devant* in new experiments in sleight of hand, and the first production of the romance mystique *The Artist's Dream.* This was invented by Devant, the sketch written by M. B. Spurr, and the mechanism was devised and constructed by Maskelyne. The magical effect was that of a picture which comes to life. The characters were Maurice an artist, played by J. B. Hansard; Ellaline, his spirit wife, played by Miss Marion Melville (Mrs. Devant); and Spirit of Mercy, played by Miss Olive Elton.

By way of comment, and in retrospect of much interest, an October announcement describing David Devant as the new prestidigitateur who had jumped into great favour, was surely a happy prophecy.

A similar programme continued to the end of the year augmented by familiar items like the orchestra and plate spinning.

On the back page of a contemporary programme was an illustration of the MASKELYNE TYPEWRITER. The advertisement said it would be on the market shortly, being the most perfect writing machine yet produced. It was "entirely new in principle, no ink ribbon required, almost noiseless, having differential spacing, and with 96 characters each visible to the operator". A Maskelyne typewriter can be seen in the Science Museum, Kensington, London.

Other commercial inventions of Maskelyne are mentioned in *White Magic* by Jasper Maskelyne, London, 1936. Even in 1966 Maskelyne coin-operated locks are to be seen in use on a few public lavatory doors in London.

In 1894 Maskelyne was describing his premises as "the cosy little hall in Piccadilly". During January and the early months, the Egyptian Hall offered little change of programme. Devant continued with sleight of hand, and at Easter he was also billed as presenting electric shadows. At that time the Artist's Dream continued, and a revival of Elixir Vitae in which J. N. Maskelyne, Cooke and W. F. Brooke played the parts.

Again in retrospect and interesting, is a June announcement which told us: "Mr. Maskelyne has retained Mr. Devant as a permanent member of his company in consequence of the great success he has achieved."

The annual vacation commenced on July 2nd during which time Mr. Snazelle was at The Hall in music, song and story.

Re-opening on August 6th saw the first production of a new and original sketch entitled *Modern Witchery*, which was invented by J. N. Maskelyne and written by Nevil Maskelyne, who also played the part of Professor Zoorooster (an adept). Others taking part were J. B. Hansard playing Countess Blarni; Miss Olive Elton played Martha Toogood (a woman with a mission); her henpecked husband, William, was played by W. F. Brooke; and E. Elton played Christofolo (alias Koor Hoomi, a Mahatma).

The sketch exposed the frauds of theosophy. The Mahatma was bound to a board supported by the backs of two chairs. The professor took a gleaming sword, and snake, and made passes over the body. The board with the body on it rose from the back of one chair and then from the other. All was suspended without visible support in mid-air. This was called the miracle of Lhasa. The form of Koot Hoomi also materialised out of the darkness to deliver a message, and then gradually faded away. The chairs were moved during the levitation, and a blue flame shot up from a goblet placed on the ground.

On this holiday programme, F. Cramer played a selection on Metzler's Organo Piano, and members of the audience desirous of inspecting the mechanism of this beautiful instrument could do so by applying to Mr. Cramer at the end of the performance. J. N. Maskelyne was again plate spinning and Devant entertained with sleight of hand and handshadows. Cramer also controlled the automatic orchestra, which, by the way, had been the invention of Maskelyne. All this continued for the rest of the year.

J. N. Maskelyne wrote widely and his book entitled *Sharps and Flats* was published. This was a revelation of the secrets of cheating at games of chance and skill. The first edition is prefaced "Egyptian Hall, February 1894", and the second edition November 1894. There was a third impression of the book in 1907.

My late good friend, EDWARD VICTOR, an esteemed sleight of hand artist, who died in 1964, told me that about 1900 he bought a copy of the book at an upstairs office in the Egyptian Hall. The man who sold him the book was David Devant himself. An interesting advertisement for this work in the programmes contained the following warning:

"No Parent should allow a son to go out into the world without a copy of this Book."

Another comment on that year of 1894 is that warmth for the Christmas fireside could be obtained from coal at fifteen shillings per ton. Those who wished to look smart could purchase a "dress shirt" for three shillings and sixpence, post free.

1895. Those who read the *English Illustrated Magazine* for January found on page 74, an interview with J. N. Maskelyne by T. Hanson Lewis, under the title of "The Great Wizard of the West". Here mentioned was "Nevil House, the commodious residence overlooking Battersea Park, which Mr. Maskelyne has built for himself". It tells us that J. N. Maskelyne sought Sunday rest and recuperation at Spring Cottage, Bucklebury Common between Reading and Newbury. Maskelyne was also reported as saying: "I trace my first desire to become a conjurer to Blitz . . . who was a friend of my father's, and he amused us with sleight of hand." Maskelyne mentioned seeing Blitz spinning plates.

The Maskelyne typewriter was on a table and the interviewer was told it was the joint "invention of myself and my son". A programme advertisement

offered this machine at 20 guineas, less 5% cash. Applications for it were to be sent to The Maskelyne Type-writer and Manufacturing Company,Limited, 41 Holborn Viaduct, E.C.; or to the Egyptian Hall.

Sir Lewis Casson, the celebrated actor, tells me that his father, Thomas Casson, who had met Maskelyne, possessed one of these typewriters.

The former Christmas programme continued until Easter, when a new and original illusion by Devant, called the *Birth of Flora* was produced on April 13th. In this a silk square was suspended in mid-air, and a table placed beneath. On this was placed a bowl of fire to which were added rose petals. The silken banner was lowered to conceal all for a moment. And on being drawn up there was revealed a large gilt basket of roses with *Flora* (Mrs. Devant) standing in the centre. This bill also included the first appearance of R. A. Roberts (humourist and mimic), plate spinning and Modern Witchery, and so continued until July 15th, from which date the annual vacation commenced.

On the afternoon of April 24th and the following evening at the Princes Hall, Piccadilly, J. N. Maskelyne introduced one of his celebrated sketches in a Testimonial Benefit show to Dr. Lynn, who also contributed to the programme. The earlier rivalry was forgotten.

Re-opening on August 5th, J. N. Maskelyne continued plate spinning, there was the automatic orchestra, Devant in sleight of hand and also presenting the Birth of Flora.

Round about October 16th, Devant introduced yet another illusion, the mechanism of which had been devised and constructed by Nevil Maskelyne. It was called the *Phoenix*.

But what did the audience see? On the stage was a cage from which a canary was taken, and then placed in a paper bag. It was hung in front of a suspended target. A helper from the audience shot at the target, the bag vanished in a flash, and instantly the target was transformed into a cage containing the canary.

Devant was indisposed between November 2nd and November 23rd, and Douglas Beaufort, who was a society entertainer with sleight of hand, ventriloquism and musical sketches at the piano, was brought back into the show.

December 21st saw the introduction of the Christmas programme in which Will, the Witch was again shown, and played by Maskelyne, Cooke, and Hansard. Roberts amused with his skit "Pantomania", and Devant continued his showing of the Phoenix and Birth of Flora.

During the year the sketch Modern Witchery, described earlier, continued to entertain, and a programme note concerning this, is fascinating, and reads:

> "The Serpent used in the incantation is a fine specimen of the South American Tree Boa, from the collection of Dr. Stradling, F.Z.S., and is believed to be the only living specimen in Europe."

CHAPTER EIGHT

ANIMATED PHOTOGRAPHS

1896. AS WAS CUSTOMARY, the former Christmas programme continued to attract audiences for practically six months. In so far as the magic was concerned there were hardly any changes. Patrons desiring a change of venue on March 9th could have gone to the Empire Theatre, London, for on that night from 9.40 p.m. to 9.55 p.m., the latest scientific wonder – Lumière's Cinematographe, projected for the first time there, animated pictures. These were under the sole management of a noted French conjurer FELICIEN TREWEY. On March 12th Lumière's Cinematographe was showing each hour, from 2.00 p.m. until 10.00 p.m. at the Polytechnic, Regent's Street, London, and the charge to see these films was one shilling.

However, on March 19th the Egyptian Hall announced that a series of *Animated Photographs* had just been added to the programmes. Advertisements of the day told us these pictures were projected by the most perfect apparatus yet constructed, and were the first ever exhibited in England illustrating amusing scenes in real life, and performances of celebrated artists. They were introduced by Nevil Maskelyne who also gave an interesting explanation of the development of these "effects". Readers seeking more details of these early cinematograph days will find information in the book *My Magic Life* by David Devant (London 1931). Devant was responsible for bringing these almost first animated pictures to the Egyptian Hall as part of the Maskelyne and Cooke entertainment.

On March 26th there was also a rival "Animatographe" from 10 p.m. to 10.15 p.m. as an item in the variety entertainment, at the London Alhambra Theatre. The exhibition of these animated photographs was under the personal supervision of R. W. Paul. These early movies continued for many months and covered such subjects as a race course, the Derby, Henley Regatta, Tsar in Paris, Rescue River scene, Twin's Tea Party, etc. At the Empire Theatre, Trewey also remained for many months, exhibiting such films as a Blacksmith, Fall of a Wall, Tobogganning, H.R. Princess Maud's wedding procession to Marlborough House, Fire Brigade Call, etc.

The annual vacation for the Maskelyne shows commenced on July 13th and ended with the re-opening on August 3rd.

All the old and recent favourites still found their places on the bills, and for the rest of the year there were animated photographs, Devant with sleight of hand, Phoenix, Birth of Flora, Roberts, Will, the Witch, and also the hand-

shadows of Devant. A contemporary report says Cooke was wonderfully agile as the monkey in Will, the Witch.

In the autumn and winter animated photographs were still included as short items in the variety shows at the theatres already mentioned. The Alhambra announced "each scene was twenty-five feet square."

On November 27th Devant published an advertisement saying: "Animated photographs sent anywhere with skilled operators. 106 finest subjects:—

Motor Race, Czar in Paris, Fire Call, etc."

His address was given as 55 Ridgemount Gardens, W.C., or Egyptian Hall.

It is now interesting to recall that magicians Devant, Trewey and Melies were among pioneers in the exhibition of animated pictures.

Maskelyne and Cooke's Christmas programme started on December 22nd, and on that occasion they offered a Christmas Fantasy entitled *Chamelion*, with a prologue by Mel B. Spurr. This was a sketch in which J. B. Hansard played the part of old Father Christmas with an attendant sprite Chamelion played by Miss Marion Melville. Also on the bill was Devant with magic and shadows, the mimic R. A. Roberts, the animated photographs and once again, Will, the Witch. And, of course, the organ.

Although there were many other entertainments in London for all tastes, Maskelyne and Cooke held their own. Maskelyne was the first to give matinee (afternoon shows) from the time of his first 1873 performance at the Egyptian Hall. Live shows were the order of the day nearly three-quarters of a century ago. It is difficult now to visualise times with no television or radio entertainment, and very few motors. Then important was the horse and the golden sovereign.

1897. The "cosy little hall in Piccadilly" with its Egyptian facade could not escape the notice of visitors to London. There were many that year, for on June 22nd, Queen Victoria celebrated her Diamond Jubilee. David Devant remained on the programme for the whole year, and presumably because of the influx of visitors, there was nothing magically new, for the well tried items were new to an ever-changing public. Miss A. Hansard played in some sketches.

The comedy act of Mel B. Spurr, Will, the Witch, revival of seances and sketches, these made up the quota of entertainment. Additionally and throughout the year the animated photographs were featured. April 17th was Easter Saturday when films were shown of the Black Diamond Express at 70 miles per hour, Whirlpool Rapids, and the grand procession of Mardi Gras. This was said to be the longest picture ever shown in London, consisting of 4,500 photographs. It occupied $3\frac{1}{2}$ minutes and used up one-fifth of a mile of film.

Shows ceased at the Egyptian Hall from June 14th until June 22nd because Maskelyne had to give his entire attention to the final preparation of the Grand Pavilion in St. Paul's Churchyard. This was one of Maskelyne's business ventures in which he was offering seats to view the Diamond Jubilee

Procession. That project is dealt with in *White Magic* by Jasper Maskelyne, and also in *Nothing up my sleeve* by Douglas Beaufort (London 1938).

On July 5th the Egyptian Hall animated pictures were topical, being Jubilee procession scenes including the Queen and the Royal Escort entering St. Paul's Churchyard.

For most of the latter half of the year Devant had animated photographs on tours. These were of the Jubilee procession, Veterans at Chelsea, Turkish War scenes, and others. From the Egyptian Hall, Devant in making announcements concerning these tours, said the photographs were by Lumière, Paul and Edison.

The Christmas programme of December 24th consisted of a selection of former magical sketches, with Spurr, Devant and pictures.

During the first four months of the New Year (1898) the same show as performed the previous Christmas was still running.

A change was made on May 7th when a new sketch was presented entitled *Trapped by Magic* (invented and written by J. N. Maskelyne), which involved a levitation using a hoop. This sketch included Devant and Cassie Bruce, each making their first appearances as characters in a magical playlet. Others acting were Hansard, E. S. Elton, Nevil and J. N. Maskelyne. On the same bill Devant presented a new series of magical problems, together with Spurr and the pictures. Some details of these are told in Devant's *My Magic Life* on pages 80 and 81 in which he recalls how he and J. N. Maskelyne appeared as Japanese jugglers, and used for the first time a black art well disguised as arum lilies, which Professor Hoffmann had presented to him. The table thus designed enabled Devant to present multiplying crystal balls, one of which was dropped into a decanter of wine through which it penetrated. The wine became water and the glass ball ruby red.

June 20th was the day of the legal case of STOLLERY AND EVANS *v.* J. N. MASKELYNE, held at the Law Courts in London before Mr. Justice Wills. They claimed the £500 reward offered for the secret of the Maskelyne Box Trick. Maskelyne said the secret of his box was only known to himself and Cooke. His box, and that of the plaintiffs, were brought into the court. Devant and Nevil Maskelyne each gave evidence. The jury could not agree. There was a second hearing of the case on October 31st when the jury gave the verdict to the plaintiffs for £500. There was a stay of execution in view of an appeal by Maskelyne which was eventually heard in the House of Lords. Maskelyne lost the day, but as has been said elsewhere, he gained lots of publicity for his Egyptian Hall shows. The litigation was fully reported in the newspapers of the day, and can be read in the London *Daily Telegraph* and the *Times*.

Throughout the year the animated pictures were regular features, and it could be said they constituted some of the earliest newsreels. Topicality, as today, was essential, as is indicated by their showing on June 30th, scenes from Gladstone's Funeral.

On July 9th, Nelson Jackson presented musical sketches, and Trapped by Magic remained a feature.

In the *Mahatma* magazine for August it was reported that at this time to celebrate his twenty-five years at the Egyptian Hall, his company presented J. N. Maskelyne with a handsomely framed illuminated address, this being surrounded by portraits of the principal members.

On July 11th the annual vacation commenced with re-opening taking place on the first day of August. There was little change of programme until December 16th when the Christmas shows commenced. This occasion saw the first production of yet another sketch entitled *The Gnomes Grot*, in which the parts were played by J. N. and Nevil Maskelyne, Cooke, Hansard and Cassie Bruce. Also on the bill was Trapped by Magic, the animated pictures, as well as Devant and Spurr.

By way of comment it is interesting to note that cigarettes were sold at 10 for threepence at the tobacconists.

In 1899 a similar pattern of performance obtained as in previous years and what was billed as the Christmas show continued well into the year. There were two magical sketches at each performance, and of course, the now regular films. On March 11th they showed animated pictures of the funeral procession of the French President, and the launching of the then largest vessel in the world, the White Star liner "Oceanic".

A London magazine *The Sketch*, on February 22nd published on page 195 full page illustrations of the Egyptian Hall sketch, The Gnomes Grot. The setting seemed to be that of a dark cave in which ghostly figures appeared whilst a stool floated in the air, and apparitions played their parts.

April 1st, Spurr returned to the show. The annual vacation was from July 17th till August 7th when practically the same magical items were shown with the addition of humourist Walter Pelham.

Those who wanted entertainment not connected with Maskelyne could, on October 31st have seen Melot Hermann at the Empire Theatre, London. An interesting note of the same day advertises that at Hampstead, in London, Dr. A. Conan Doyle was giving readings from his own works.

On October 14th an interesting advertisement appeared for MASKELYNE AND COOKE'S ENTERTAINMENT BUREAU which would supply any kind of entertainment for private and public gatherings. Entertainers employed by the Agency had been witnessed by the proprietors to ensure that clients obtained suitable performers. Many notable artists were available among whom were David Devant, Martin Chapender, Frederic Culpitt, Astley Weaver, Oswald Williams, Joad Heteb (who was P. T. Selbit), and Gintaro the Japanese juggler of extraordinary skill. J. N. Maskelyne always said that if he could, he would take a 99 years lease of Gintaro. One had to apply to Devant, Managing Partner of the Entertainment Bureau, Egyptian Hall. For the first time, if my research is correct, we find a telephone number published for the Egyptian Hall. It was Gerrard 5396.

Around December 18th The Hall was closed to the public because of preparations for the Christmas programme, which in fact, commenced on December 23rd. Established favourites made up the show, such as Will, the Witch, Trapped by Magic, Devant's magical problems, and animated pictures of President Kruger.

It speaks well of the showmanship of all concerned with Egyptian Hall magic, that they could continue to attract regular audiences whilst using similar material for such long periods.

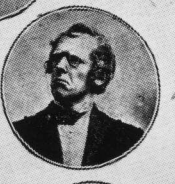
PART II.

THE ENTRANCED FAKIR.

An Original Magical Romance with a Moral,

WRITTEN AND INVENTED BY

Mr. J. N. MASKELYNE.



CHARACTERS.

DAN'L DAW (an old Showman)
Mr. J. N. MASKELYNE.

STUMPY (his Factotum ... **Mr. T. TEAGUE.**

BLISS (A Bum Bailiff) ...
SIR JAMES FRANKLIN ...
LORD OF THE MANOR and J.P. ... ... } **Mr. J. B. HANSARD.**

FRASER (his Solicitor and Estate Agent)
Mr. E. MOREHEN.

DICK NICHOLLS (*alias* Dr. Nicolini, a former member of Daw's Company)...**Mr. E. S. ELTON.**

SAM MUGRIDGE (*alias* Dryanard Boo Sing, the Entranced Fakir) ... **Mr. G. A. COOKE.**

CHIN CHIN CHEW (a Chinese Juggler)
HERR VALADON.

MARGERY DAW
Miss CASSIE BRUCE.

Scene:—
The Stage of a Travelling Show.

Period:—
The Present.

In arranging this Sketch Mr. MASKELYNE has had a two-fold object in view. (1) The exposure of certain hypnotic frauds; (2) the invention of an interesting and amusing setting for the introduction of mysteries.

The levitation of "THE ENTRANCED FAKIR" is admitted by magical experts to be the most inexplicable mystery ever exhibited. Persons conversant with the numerous methods of causing human beings to apparently float in space, are unable to find the slightest clue to this scientific problem. Large sums have been offered for the secret, but Mr. MASKELYNE refuses to sell it. The invention is destined to prove a greater puzzle than the famous Box Trick, which has remained unsolved for 40 years, notwithstanding the fact that £1,000 Reward is offered for the discovery of the secret.

Herr Valadon can accept Private Engagements at hours that will not interfere with his appearances at the Egyptian Hall.
For Particulars apply to the Entertainment Bureau, Egyptian Hall.

Courtesy of The Magtc Circle

This programme page shows the characters. It was in the "ENTRANCED FAKIR" that Cooke made his last appearance

CHAPTER NINE

HERR VALADON AND MARTIN CHAPENDER

1900. FOR THE FIRST three months of that year, the same entertainment continued, and was augmented with pictures from the South African War.

April 14th was Easter Saturday and the occasion for the first production of a new sketch, *My Twin Spirit,* written and invented by J. N. Maskelyne and described as a magical comedietta. E. S. Elton played the part of Frank Freemantle, a widower; J. N. Maskelyne was Professor Primus a magician; J. B. Hansard was Dennis an Irish servant, and Miss Cassie Bruce played the part of Madge Faulkner, Frank's deceased wife's sister. The scene was set in an apartment of Frank Freemantle's house. The sketch was another vehicle for "spirit" manifestations.

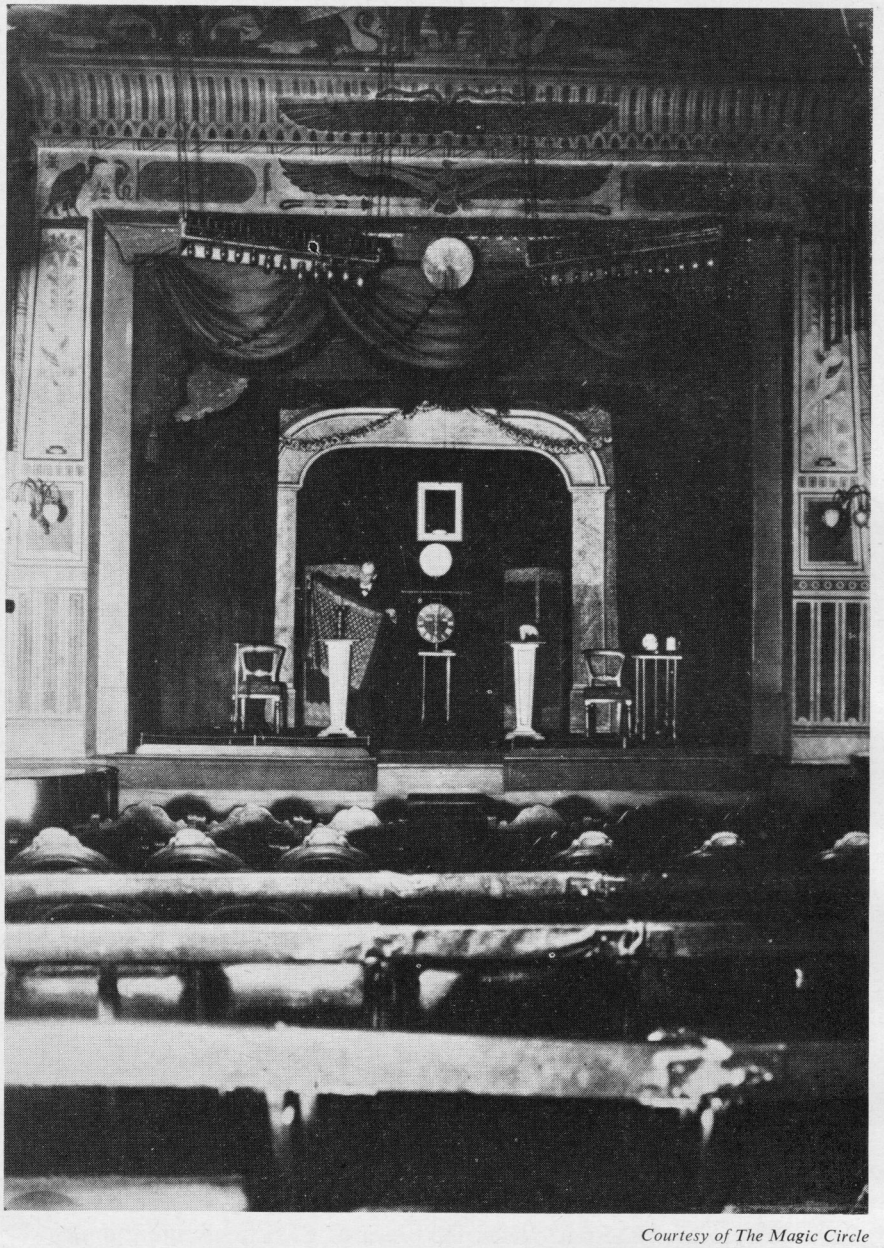
The annual vacation commenced on July 16th. Although unconnected with the Egyptian Hall, I must tell you that on that day Houdini made his first appearance in England. The great Handcuff King was allotted a twenty minutes spot on the London Alhambra programme.

Maskelyne's Home of Mystery re-opened on August 6th when he again showed his skill at plate spinning. There was a new series of animated photographs which included one of the recent solar eclipse, taken in North Carolina, by Nevil Maskelyne, F.R.A.S. They were introduced by J. N. Maskelyne, and were accompanied by the Mechanical Orchestra controlled by F. Cramer. The programme tells us that during the adjustment of the films, Mr. C. W. Locke would exhibit a number of snapshots taken at the "Seat of War", also portraits of generals, and some TRINOPTIC LANTERN EFFECTS.

This was also the day on which *Herr Valadon*, a conjurer of German origin, made his first appearance at The Hall, in sleight of hand. *Psychological problems* (thought-reading) were presented with the assistance of *Madam Valadon.*

December 22nd was the commencement of the Christmas shows when Valadon introduced what was then called a new mystery *The Tuppenny Tubes,* which consisted of magical productions from Organ Pipes. His sleight of hand was with balls, coins and cards. It was also announced that Nevil Maskelyne's patented projector, the MUTAGRAPH, would be used.

1901. Those who had patronised the previous Christmas entertainment at The Hall could have their appetites for more magic satisfied in January by visits to other theatres. At that time Howard Thurston was at the Palace Theatre, Imro Fox at the Empire, and Houdini was to be seen at the Alhambra.



Courtesy of The Magic Circle

Paul Valadon, on the small Egyptian Hall stage, presenting his Vanishing Lamp

Queen Victoria died on January 22nd, and on February 11th Maskelyne was showing pictures of the funeral procession.

April 6th, Easter Saturday, still found Valadon on the bill. This day was noteworthy because of the first production of the *Entranced Fakir*. This was yet another sketch written and invented by J. N. Maskelyne, set on "the stage of a travelling show", and based on a human levitation. The characters were as follows. Dan'l Daw an old showman, played by J. N. Maskelyne; Stumpy, his factotum, played by T. Teague; Bliss, a Bum Bailiff and Sir James Franklin, Lord of the Manor, were each played by J. B. Hansard; Dick Nicholls, played by E. S. Elton; Sam Mugridge, alias Dryanard Boo Sing, the Entranced Fakir, played by G. A. Cooke; Margery Daw, played by Cassie Bruce; Chin Chin Chew, a Chinese Juggler, played by Herr Valadon; and Fraser, a solicitor, played by Nevil Maskelyne.

Cramer still controlled the mechanical orchestra, and the pictures were seen from the new projector. As previously C. W. Locke showed his lantern effects during the changing of the film spools.

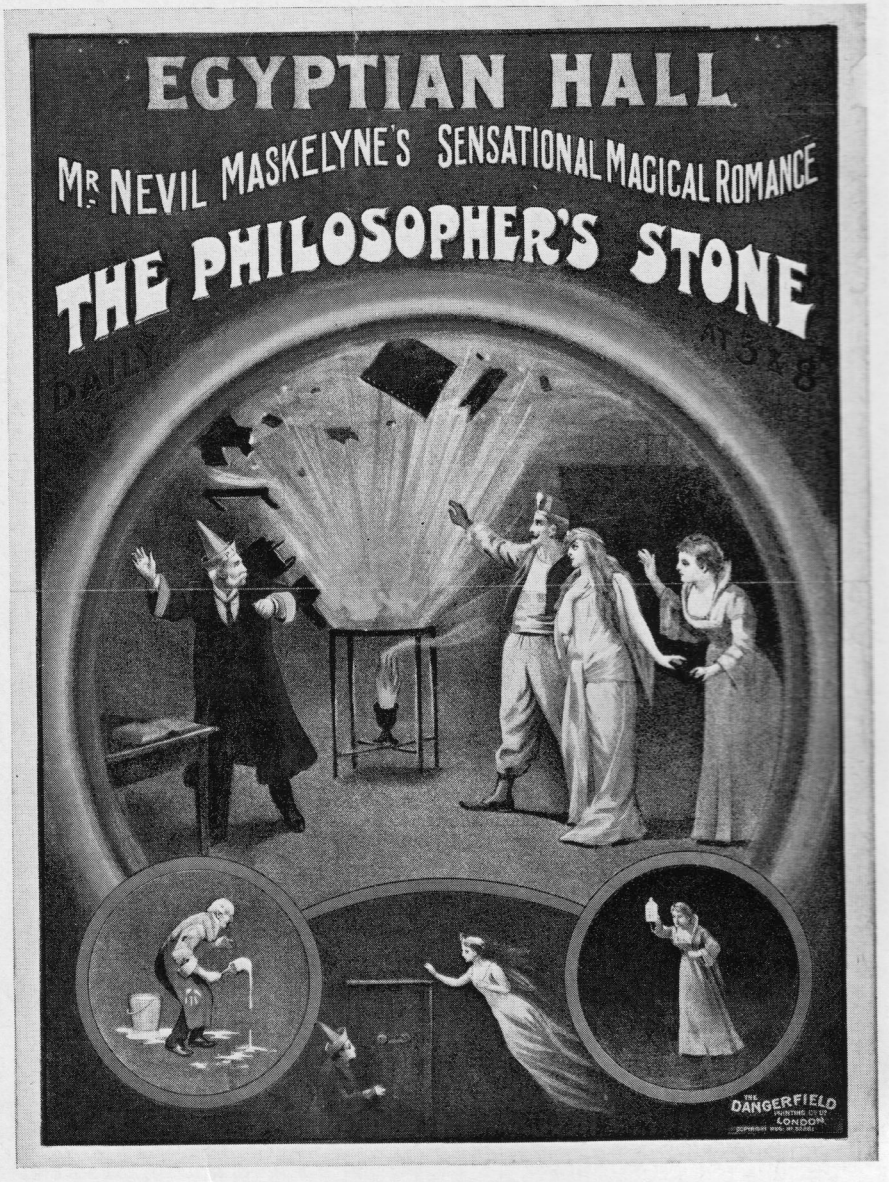
Egyptian Hall advertisements continued to appear, almost daily in certain London newspapers and in some periodicals throughout all these years. Many other rival entertainments could always be seen in London for then wireless and television were things of the future. Contemporary newspapers tell us that Horace Goldin was at the Palace Theatre on July 15th on which day Maskelyne closed for his annual vacation. His show re-opened on August 5th with the same programmes as earlier.

December 21st saw the commencement of yet another Christmas Season. Again there was but little change. The Entranced Fakir remained a feature, as did Valadon with his magical problems, and the pictures. Spurr was also on that bill dressed as a jester and presented a character sketch entitled *Cap and Bells*.

In 1902 pride of place on the programme was given to the Entranced Fakir. This time the part of Fraser was played by E. Morehen instead of by Nevil Maskelyne as previously. As well as an actor, Edward Morehen was a very able electrical and mechanical engineer for J. N. Maskelyne. He was the son of Horace Morehen, the black and white artist. A contemporary report in the *Black and White Budget* for February 8th tells us that Cassie Bruce was dressed as a vivandière (French Military costume), and stood with her back to a large paper target, fired a rifle over her shoulder, and appeared to hit the centre of a ring drawn in one of the circles.

That year Cooke was 76 years old, and J. N. Maskelyne in his sixty-third year. For both of them respect must be paid for their remarkable stamina and performances. However, Cooke was unwell, and made his last appearance at the Egyptian Hall in the Entranced Fakir.

Valadon, still on the bill attired in Chinese costume for his celestial wonders, catching goldfish in the air with rod and line, and from a jar of water producing dry ribbons and silks. He also produced a boy from the folds of his



A beautifully coloured playbill

garments. Valadon, earlier in the programme, in evening dress, presented the Rising Cards together with other card tricks. He featured an effect in which a lighted lamp on a table became the target for his firing pistol. The oil lamp then vanished, and re-appeared in front of a framed mirror at the back of the stage.

The organ and pictures continued as regular items, and in June the Coronation of King Edward VII appeared on the screen. Spurr was also billed.

That year the annual vacation began on July 14th followed by a resumption of the entertainment on August 4th. From then until Christmas, the same programme continued, showing that many visitors must have found their way to what was now an "institution" – the Maskelyne mysteries. The coronation pictures were exhibited for many weeks at the Egyptian Hall.

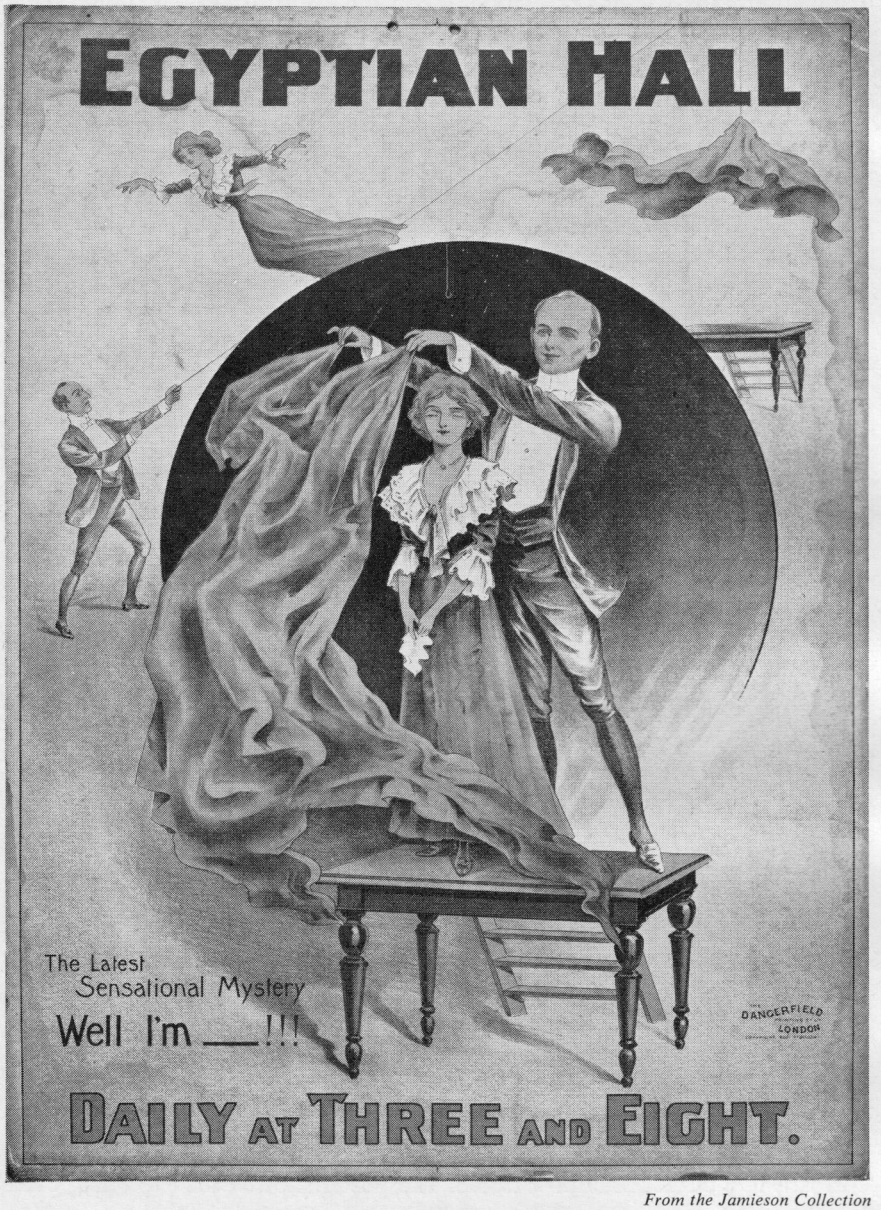
The thirtieth Christmas programme commenced on December 20th. This was the occasion of the first production of Nevil Maskelyne's merry magical farce entitled *The Philosopher's Stone.*

Valadon still presented his celestial mysteries. During that year Madam Valadon also assisted her husband in their mind-reading act. Excellent descriptions of Valadon's performances accompanied with a photograph and reminiscences, were published in the *Magic Circular* for April 1942 and May 1961, when T. B. Donovan recalled his visits to The Hall.

For most of 1903 the Philosopher's Stone was included in the shows, as were the pictures and the magic of Paul Valadon, excepting during the annual vacation from July 13th until the resumption on August 3rd. On that occasion the sketch celebrated its 350th performance, and commenced its second year on December 22nd. The Philosopher's Stone ran for forty minutes and had for its setting a vault beneath Corselight Castle, Graveleigh, Ghostershire. The characters were Sir Grimleigh Greensward, played by J. N. Maskelyne; Huckaback, marine store dealer, alias an alchemist played by E. Morehen; Bottles, a butler played by J. B. Hansard; Lady Kitty Greensward, played by Mrs. Valadon; Ali Ben Slober, played by E. S. Elton; and Moonsheen, played by Cassie Bruce. On this programme she is also billed as singing "The Love that Endures", the words of which were by J. N. Maskelyne and the music arranged by F. Cramer.

The Philosopher's Stone was a vehicle for magical transpositions and levitation. There was an oven filled with lead ingots, and these eventually changed into Ali Ben Slober.

A beautiful playbill for the sketch was published at the time. Size about 15″ × 20″ and printed in colours on a maroon background is the vault scene enclosed in a circular rainbow frame. The poster showed the exploding oven in a flash of flame and Cassie Bruce with long flowing hair and wearing a blue dress; Mrs. Valadon in a long grey dress; a male character, presumably the alchemist, in a red coat and wizard's hat, with another in pink coat and trousers. I am happy to record that this colourful poster is in my collection.



From the Jamieson Collection

Coloured showcard for another vanishing lady (Paul Valadon)

The Christmas programme was important because Valadon introduced, for the first time in this country, his mysterious clock dial, and what was then an entirely new mystery, *A Drum That Can't Be Beaten,* in which flags, etc., were magically produced from what appeared to be an empty suspended drum.

On the same occasion he also presented an illusion, the mechanism of which had been specially constructed by Nevil Maskelyne, and was called *Well I'm . . .* A lady, Miss Cassie Bruce, stood on a table and was covered with a cloth. The lady then vanished. My good friend, Mr. Harry Latour, remembers his visits to the Egyptian Hall, and has described Valadon's act to me.

With the orchestra managed by F. Cramer, and lantern effects by C. W. Locke during adjustments of film spools, Nevil Maskelyne introduced the animated photographs.

When the show was over on December 22nd there was a special party of friends at the Egyptian Hall to celebrate Mr. Maskelyne's 64th birthday, and the "30th and last one" he would spend at that Hall. He announced the eventual demolition of the Egyptian Hall which was the "oldest place of entertainment in London".

A long report of this birthday party was published in the London *Daily Telegraph* for December 23rd.

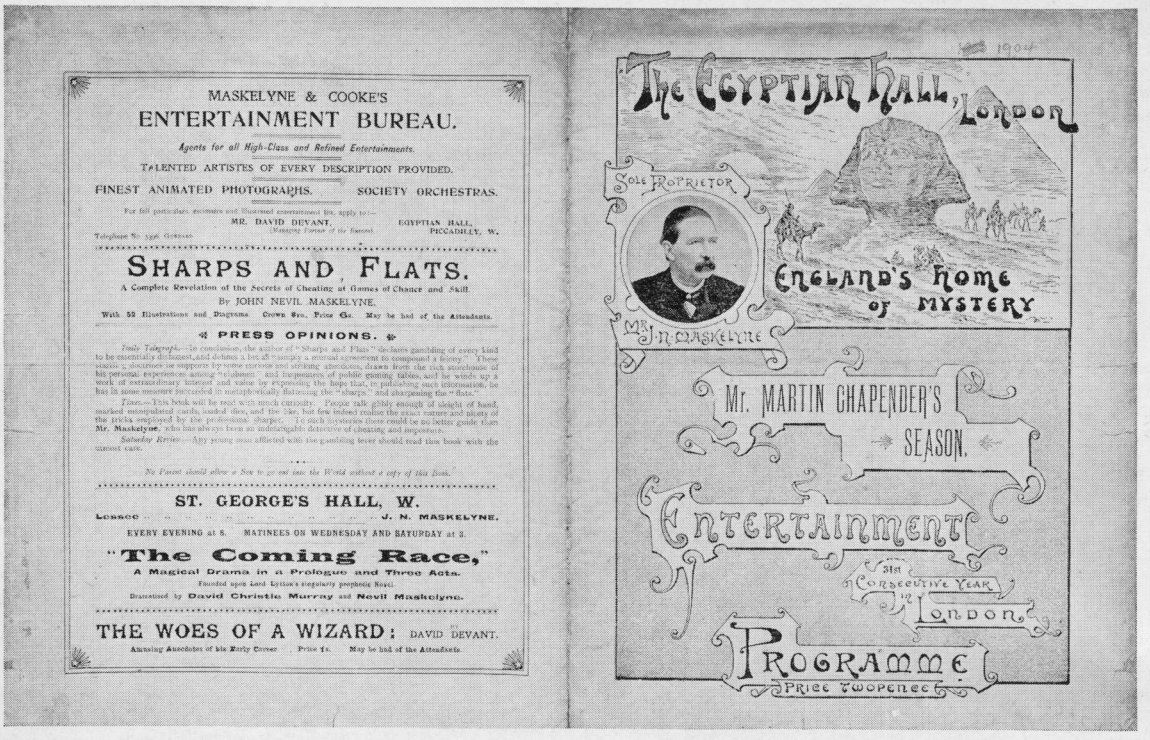
1904. That year the previous Christmas programme continued through till August 1st. The annual vacation had been earlier than usual – from June 20th to July 4th.

On August 1st *Walter Graham* appeared with his *marionettes*, and also *Martin Chapender*, a tall handsome young conjurer in his twenties, formerly an insurance clerk in Liverpool. Maskelyne had recognised the skill of Chapender, especially in billiard ball manipulation.

This is what an eager audience saw.

Chapender attired in evening dress entered to his simple stage setting of three tables. Gloves were removed and vanished. The stick he carried also vanished, but was later reproduced from his trousers pocket. The stick was then placed into a large envelope, the latter was crushed and the stick had gone, only to be found in another envelope previously shown empty. Now he introduced a pack of playing cards. Some of these magically changed colour, whilst selected marked cards rose into the air from the pack placed in a glass. There were cards which, held in one hand only, diminished in size. In this patter act, expert manipulation of billiard balls followed, including productions, transpositions and colour changes. Concluding this routine, a white ball was wrapped in a piece of paper, then torn apart and out flew a pigeon. From his opera hat he produced a dove, two or three rabbits and also a cockerel. Finally a watch vanished by magic and later was discovered in a nest of boxes.

Neil Weaver reminiscing in the *Magic Circular* for January 1942 included a photograph of Chapender when describing the act, with notes of this performer's beginnings in magic.



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Agents for all High-Class and Refined Entertainments.

TALENTED ARTISTES OF EVERY DESCRIPTION PROVIDED.

FINEST ANIMATED PHOTOGRAPHS. SOCIETY ORCHESTRAS.

For full particulars, estimates and illustrated entertainment list, apply to:—

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Telephone No. 1396 Gerrard

SHARPS AND FLATS.

A Complete Revelation of the Secrets of Cheating at Games of Chance and Skill.

By JOHN NEVIL MASKELYNE.

With 52 Illustrations and Diagrams. Crown 8vo. Price 6s. May be had of the Attendants.

PRESS OPINIONS.

Daily Telegraph.—In conclusion, the author of "Sharps and Flats" declares gambling of every kind to be essentially dishonest, and defines a bet as "simply a mutual agreement to compound a felony." These views, doubtless, he supports by some curious and striking anecdotes, drawn from the rich storehouse of his personal experiences among "cracksmen" and frequenters of public gaming tables, and he winds up a work of extraordinary interest and value by expressing the hope that, in publishing such information, he has in some measure succeeded in metaphorically Balancing the "sharps," and sharpening the "flats."

Town.—This book will be read with much curiosity. People talk glibly enough of sleight of hand, marked or manipulated cards, loaded dice, and the like, but few indeed realise the exact nature and nicety of the tricks employed by the professional sharper. To such mysteries there could be no better guide than Mr. Maskelyne, who has always been an indefatigable detective of cheating and imposture.

Saturday Review.—Any young man afflicted with the gambling fever should read this book with the utmost care.

No Parent should allow a Son to go out into the World without a copy of this Book.

ST. GEORGE'S HALL, W.

Lessee ... J. N. MASKELYNE.

EVERY EVENING at 8. MATINEES ON WEDNESDAY AND SATURDAY at 3.

"The Coming Race,"

A Magical Drama in a Prologue and Three Acts.

Founded upon Lord Lytton's singularly prophetic Novel.

Dramatised by David Christie Murray and Nevil Maskelyne.

THE WOES OF A WIZARD: DAVID DEVANT.

Amusing Anecdotes of his Early Career. Price 1s. May be had of the Attendants.

1904

The Egyptian Hall, London

Sole Proprietor

Mr. J. N. MASKELYNE

England's Home of Mystery

Mr. MARTIN CHAPENDER'S SEASON.

ENTERTAINMENT

31st Consecutive Year in London

PROGRAMME

Price Twopence

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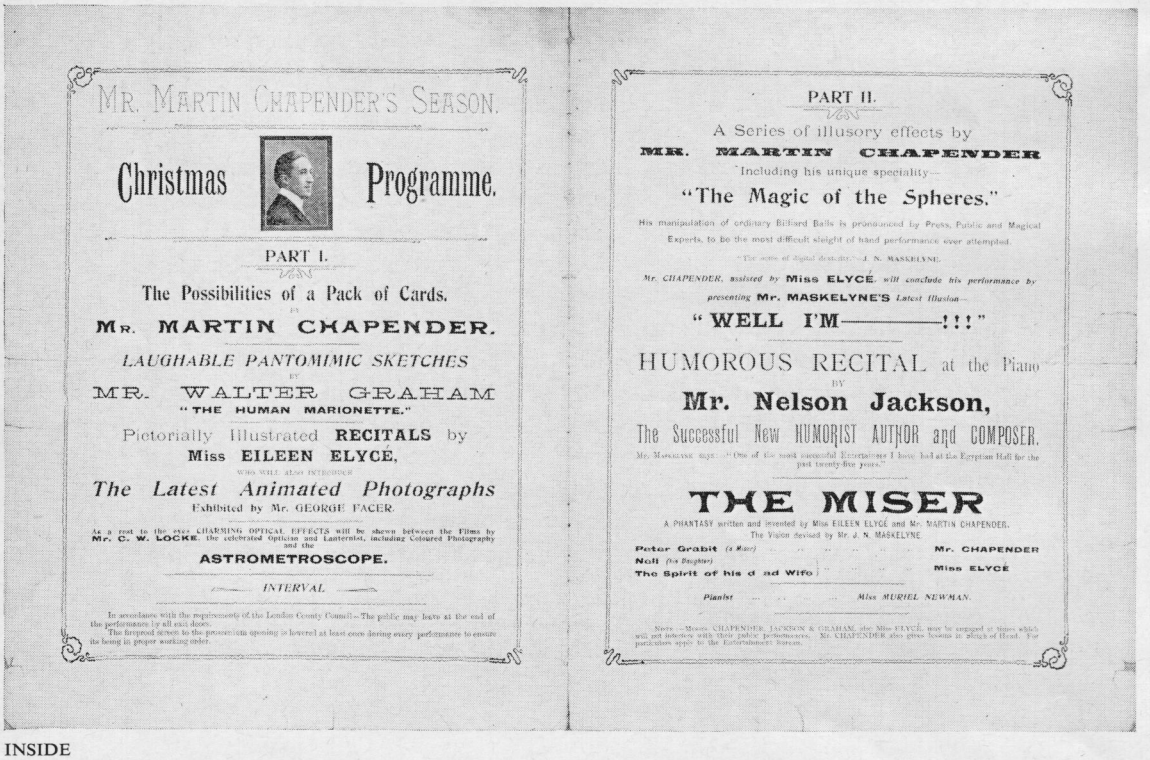

MR. MARTIN CHAPENDER'S SEASON.

Christmas Programme.

PART I.

The Possibilities of a Pack of Cards.

BY

MR. MARTIN CHAPENDER.

LAUGHABLE PANTOMIMIC SKETCHES

BY

MR. WALTER GRAHAM

"THE HUMAN MARIONETTE."

Pictorially Illustrated RECITALS by

Miss EILEEN ELYCE,

WHO WILL ALSO INTRODUCE

The Latest Animated Photographs

Exhibited by Mr. GEORGE FACER.

As a rest to the eyes CHARMING OPTICAL EFFECTS will be shewn between the Films by Mr. C. W. LOCKE, the celebrated Optician and Lanternist, including Coloured Photography and the

ASTROMETROSCOPE.

INTERVAL

In accordance with the requirements of the London County Council—The public may leave at the end of the performance by all exit doors.

The fireproof screen to the proscenium opening is lowered at least once during every performance to ensure its being in proper working order.

PART II.

A Series of illusory effects by

MR. MARTIN CHAPENDER

Including his unique speciality—

"The Magic of the Spheres."

His manipulation of ordinary Billiard Balls is pronounced by Press, Public and Magical Experts, to be the most difficult sleight of hand performance ever attempted.

"The acme of digital dexterity."—J. N. MASKELYNE.

Mr. CHAPENDER, assisted by Miss ELYCE, *will conclude his performance by presenting* Mr. MASKELYNE'S *Latest Illusion*—

"WELL I'M————!!!"

HUMOROUS RECITAL at the Piano

BY

Mr. Nelson Jackson,

The Successful New HUMORIST AUTHOR and COMPOSER.

Mr. MASKELYNE says:—"One of the most successful Entertainers I have had at the Egyptian Hall for the past twenty-five years."

THE MISER

A PHANTASY written and invented by Miss EILEEN ELYCE and Mr. MARTIN CHAPENDER.

The Vision devised by Mr. J. N. MASKELYNE.

Peter Grabit *(a Miser)* ... Mr. CHAPENDER

Nell *(his Daughter)* ...

The Spirit of his d ad Wife ... Miss ELYCE

Pianist ... *Miss MURIEL NEWMAN.*

Notes.—Messrs. CHAPENDER, JACKSON & GRAHAM, also Miss ELYCE, may be engaged at times which will not interfere with their public performances. Mr. CHAPENDER also gives lessons in Sleight of Hand. For particulars apply to the Entertainment Bureau.

INSIDE

A final programme for Egyptian Hall magic. Martin Chapender's season

Well I'm was on the bill, also the pictures. *E. A. Maskelyne* made his first appearance, and was assisted by Cassie Bruce in the foregoing illusion.

December 10th found The Hall closed because of preparations for the Christmas season, which was under the management of, and known as, *Martin Chapender's Season*. Whilst J. N. Maskelyne was still lessee of the Egyptian Hall, Chapender began on December 26th. The actual programme was printed on a double tinted paper, blue outside and pink inside, and the cost was twopence.

Chapender opened with a pack of cards and was followed by the human marionette Walter Graham. Then came pictorially illustrated recitals by Miss Eileen Elyce, who also introduced the latest animated photographs exhibited by GEORGE FACER. Charming optical effects were shown between the films by C. W. Locke including coloured photography and the ASTROMETROSCOPE. The second part of the entertainment was opened with billiard ball manipulation by Chapender which he called the "magic of the spheres". He was then assisted by Miss Elyce in the presentation of Maskelyne's illusion Well I'm.

Nelson Jackson followed with humourous recitals at the piano. The show concluded with a phantasy written and invented by Eileen Elyce and Chapender (with vision devised by J. N. Maskelyne) entitled *The Miser*. Peter Grabit, a miser, was played by Chapender, who produced gold coins from the air, whilst Miss Elyce played the dual parts of Nell, his daughter, and the Spirit of his dead wife. There was also a pianist Miss Muriel Newman.

Towards the end of 1904 it would seem that Mr. M. H. Spielmann, who was a well known art critic and author, had been in communication with J. N. Maskelyne, as is indicated by the following autograph letter in my collection:

"Egyptian Hall, London, W.
Decr. 6th, 1904.

Dear Mr. Spielmann,

In my hurried letter I think I omitted to say that I consider the Fairy Tale you submitted to me is not quite suitable for a magical sketch. It should lend itself more to fun and startling effects.

I find it necessary to arrange the effects first, and write round them. The story was very charming and I am sure Mrs. Spielmann would be able to write a Fairy Play if I ever arrange to introduce one, and if she has no objection to write round any illusions I may at some time arrange.

Accept my best thanks for your kind offer to write up *The Coming Race*. I shall be very grateful for any assistance in that respect. It is a very anxious

time for me having expended so much money and labour upon the production.

I cannot at present fix a date for the production with certainty.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
J. N. Maskelyne."

This letter, written shortly before the closure of the Egyptian Hall refers to *The Coming Race*, a magical drama, with which J. N. Maskelyne opened at St. George's Hall early in January 1905.

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ADDENDUM

1905. The magic at the Egyptian Hall ended with the afternoon and evening performances concluding the Martin Chapender Season on January 21st.

On January 23rd a *Daily Telegraph* advertisement announced:

"THE EGYPTIAN HALL IS CLOSED FOR DEMOLITION, MR. MASKELYNE HAS REMOVED TO HIS NEW HOME OF MYSTERY – ST. GEORGE'S HALL".

On February 2nd, 1905, G. A. Cooke died. His death was recorded in the *ERA* (theatrical paper) for that week, and in the same journal a short obituary was published on February 11th, 1905.

Chapender, whose real name was Harold Martin Jones, died on February 9th, when he was less than thirty years old.

FOOTNOTE

My narrative has ended. During the last years of the Egyptian Hall, Maskelyne and Cooke had a provincial company on tour under the management of David Devant. The illusions had been developed at The Hall. I have not reported these provincial tours because detailed data has not been available to me. Devant was the managing partner of Maskelyne and Cooke's Entertainment Bureau, which not only provided conjurers but also other types of entertainers.

MAURICE VICTOR, described as a Court Entertainer with Sleight of Hand and Hand Shadows, issued a brochure in which he said he was "From the Egyptian Hall", and that he had deputised for Devant.

Where desirable details seem to be missing in parts of my chronicle, it is because in those instances I lack authentic data.

Maskelyne and Cooke Programmes were, I think, all four pages each, varying in size from 8″ × 5″ up to about 11″ × 9″, sometimes on white paper, but often on tinted paper of various colours. The early programmes often had marginal line drawings depicting automata, seance, or decapitation and so on. Around 1878 illustrations were by G. Pilorell. Among the printers were Letts, Sons & Co., L. H. Burgoyne, Walter Smith, Ward, Burgiss Brown, all of London, although the last named also had a Maidstone imprint. Prices of programmes ranged from one penny to threepence. I think it would be safe to assume the smaller size programmes were used for the afternoon shows.

In the following references I mention Mrs. Mead (J. N. Maskelyne's daughter). The theme of her letter concerned the Box Trick invented and constructed by her father in the late "sixties" and performed by him and Cooke who alone knew the secret. She states that after the law case, her father took the box to pieces and destroyed the mechanism, saying the secret had never been discovered and would die with him. Mr. Morton, who had been their business manager, then ninety-eight years old, also wrote in a similar manner.

Coloured Showcards and Bills, mainly 19″ × 15″, are to be found in collections, as follows:—

Printed by Clement Smith, London
- Zach the Hermit
- Fanfare, Zoe, Psycho

Printed by D. & J. Allen, Belfast
- Maskelyne and Cooke (Floating)

Printed by Canning, London
- Birth of Flora

Printed by Dangerfield, London
- Well, I'm
- Philosopher's Stone

Printed by Bettam & Bolton, London
- Maskelyne and Cooke

Printed by Stafford, Nottingham
- Buatier
- Zoe

Printed by Culliford, London
- Arcana
- Mahatmas Outdone
- Modern Witchery
- Animated Photographs

Printed by J. Weiner, London
- Artist's Dream
- Trapped by Magic

Most of the above are pictorial

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